A

Syſtem of Divinity,

in

A COURSE of SERMONS,

on the

FIRST INSTITUTIONS of RELIGION;

On the Being and Attributes of GOD;

on ſome of the moſt important

Articles of the Christian-Religion,

in Connection;

And

On the ſeveral Virtues and Vices of Mankind:

with Occaſional Diſcourſes.

Being a Compilation from the beſt Sentiments of the politeſt Writers, and eminent, ſound Divines, both ancient and modern, on the ſame Subjects, properly connected, with Improvements, particularly adapted for the Uſe of chief FAMILIES and STUDENTS in DIVINITY, and for CHURCHES, for the Benefit of Mankind in general.

Volume XX.

By the Rev'd Wm. Davy. A. B.

Lustleigh, Devon.

Printed by Himſelf. —— Fourteen Copies only.

MDCCCIV.

A

System of Divinity,

in

A COURSE of SERMONS,

on the

FIRST INSTITUTIONS of RELIGION;

On the Being and Attributes of GOD;

on the Fall of Man, and the Corruption of his Nature;

And on the Gospel-Revelation;

in Connection;

On the several Ways of Manifesting

with Occ

Volume XX.

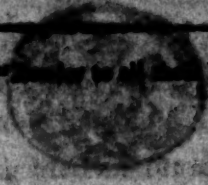
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PRINCETON.

SERMONS

on Social and Relative Duties.



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SERMONS

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In this Book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon calls himself the Preacher, thinking it no Disparagement to his Royal Dignity to descend from Government to instruct his People. God had blessed him with the greatest Wisdom, and the Circumstance of his Reign afforded him sufficient Experience in the World; so that having observed and tried the several Courses of human Life, in this Book he sums up all his Observations, for the Honour of God, and the Benefit of succeeding Ages. Here he has shewn us the true Bounds of Wisdom and Folly, what is either profitable or hurtful to the Sons of Men; the powerful Inclinations which we have to Vice, and the more powerful Motives to allure us to Virtue. Here the Ways of God are faithfully related,

ted, the Nature of Man is perfectly described, and the neceſſary Connection between Folly and Repentance, Sin & Judgment, is exactly ſhewn. Here he recounts all the Follies of his Youth, and the Excurſions of his riper Years; his fond Purſuits after Pleaſure & Mirth, Women and Wine, all things which vain and inconſiderate Men are apt to ſet their Hearts upon; and he ſums up all in this ſhort Sentence, "Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity." And, in the Text, "For all theſe Things God will bring thee into Judgment."

The Extravagances of Youth, and of every Age, are what all Men muſt give an Account for.

Tho the Preacher, in theſe Words, principally directs himſelf to the Young, yet, they comprehend the whole Compaſs of our Lives, and ſerve for Inſtruction to every Age. They ſhew us how naturally Youth begins in Folly and Sin, which neceſſarily lead us to Repentance in our riper Years; and, if continued in, will bring us to Judgment in our latter End.

They are, therefore, to be conſidered as a ſmart Irony of the Wiſe Man to the unthinking Youth, and the Follies of Mankind, and the ſure Conſequence that will await them.

Tho' we ſhould take our Courſe of Pleaſure, and "walk in the Ways of our Heart, and in the Sight of our Eyes, yet know, that for all theſe things God will bring us into Judgment." In

In ſpeaking further to theſe Words, I ſhall, agreeably to the Deſign of the Preacher,

Firſt, Lay before you, the Follies of Youth in the Practice of Sin: — And then,

Secondly, Diſſuade them from it by that weighty Conſideration here propoſed in the Text; "For all theſe things God will bring thee into Judgment."

Firſt, Of the Inclinations of Youth and the Vanity of them, which cannot be more elegantly expreſſed than in the former Part of the Verſe before us, wherein Solomon artificially expoſes the Humour of that Age, by ſhewing, how it indulges its own Fancy, and affects nothing more than a boundleſs uninterrupted Flow of Pleaſures: "Rejoice, O young Man, in thy Youth, and let thy Heart cheer thee in the Days of thy Youth, and walk in the Ways of thy Heart, and in the Sight of thine Eyes." — And,

Though this, at firſt Sight, ſeems very pleaſing, yet, if we view it nearer, we ſhall find the Paſſage ſo full of Danger, as rather to diſſuade a wiſe Man's Attempt, than invite his Curioſity. — As,

I. "Rejoice, O Young Man." And what is Joy, but Folly and Want of Conſideration? It is to give ourſelves up to a heedleſs intemperate Life, to diſcard our Reaſon leſt it ſhould reprove our Vanity; it is acquiring ſuch a Habit of Mind as not only endan-

gers our Souls, but is unſuitable to our Nature. The Providence of God has diſpenſed to every Man a Mixture of Good and Evil in this World, and every wiſe Man will be contented with that Allay. But if we ſeparate the bitter from the ſweet, what ſhall we do when we come to the Bottom of the Portion, where the Dregs will be all Bitterneſs, and when God moreover will put Trembling into our Cup? A wiſe Heathen obſerved, that true Joy is a ſerious thing; and a wiſer than he ſaid of Laughter, that "it is Madneſs; and of Mirth, what does it?" It only deludes us with falſe Appearances of Happineſs. It leads us into a Fool's Paradiſe, and there leaves us to lament our Loſs of it. It ſeduces us from the Paths of Virtue and Honour, into a ſmooth Way. It gives a Looſe to our Paſſions, and baniſhes that Wiſdom which is our beſt Guard and Defence. — Again,

"Rejoice, O young Man, in thy Youth:" but what is there in Youth to occaſion ſuch Rejoicing? Youth is a Time of Weakneſs and Inexperience, and is generally ſo ill managed as to prove a Reproach to our riper and more advanced Age; and is this Matter of Joy? Is this a proper Seaſon to rejoice, when we are ſowing the Seeds of long Repentance? Is this a Time to truſt our Virtue without a Guard, when our Reaſon is weak, and our Paſſions ſtrong? From whence pro-

proceeds this Confidence, or what can we find in our Youth to create in us this Aſſurance? Is Want of Underſtanding a Happineſs, or Want of Experience a Commendation? How powerful a thing is Ignorance in ſo perverſe a Creature as Man? But as Youth is a Time of Strength and Health; for then our Spirits are active, and our Humour gay; therefore the young Man regards Pleaſure as his Portion, and goes on, rejoicing in his Lot. But further,

"And let thy Heart cheer thee in the Days of thy Youth:" (i.e) improve all Opportunities of Joy, and take thy Fill of Pleaſure.

It is true; Youth, like the Spring, is a Time of Hopes; and yet it is only the Hopes of a joyful Harveſt; for THEN is the proper Time for Joy: but why ſhould we flatter ourſelves with the Hopes of a glorious Harveſt, which perhaps we may never reap!

Again, Youth is a Time of Strength and Health; But alas! how ſhort, how uncertain is that Time and Strength? How liable to be ſupplanted by Diſeaſe, or untimely Death? All this the young Man, ignorant as he is, cannot but know. Is it not, therefore, the greateſt Folly, and Height of Preſumption, deſperately to reſolve in a Courſe wherein we have only blind Fancy and impetuous Paſſion for our Guides, and to allow ourſelves the full Scope of our Inclinations in them? But,

Is a young Man ſo wiſe as to be truſted without a Guide, when Age itſelf, with all its Experience, ſtands in need of good Advice? It is dangerous even for the wiſeſt to "lean unto their own Underſtandings;" with what Confidence then can the young Man preſume to "walk in the Ways of his Heart, and in the Sight of his Eyes," when both the One and the Other are ſo blind and deceitful? — But,

Not to dwell longer on this general View, let us enquire a little into thoſe particular Vices which young Perſons are ſo fond of, and which the Preacher, in the Text, may well be ſuppoſed to have a particular Eye to. — And here,

Among the Vices of Youth, and as more eſpecially prevailing at theſe Times, and for which we muſt expect to be called in Judgment hereafter, we may well reckon the following, [viz.]

"Raſh and Evil-ſpeaking, – Intemperance, – exceſſive Love of ſenſual Pleaſures, – miſpending of precious Time, – impatient of Advice, and Forgetfulneſs of God." — And,

Firſt, Raſh and Evil-ſpeaking. — This is a Sin particularly incident to the Fire and Heat of Youth.

Modeſty and Good-manners, yea, and even Religion itſelf, are but too often the Subject of their Ridicule:

cule: (*) What bold and daring Expreſſions drop from their hafty Lips! what Oaths and Imprecations!

(*) Were there either none, or but very little and uncertain Evidence for the Truth of Religion; yet even in that Caſe, a reaſonable and fair Man would be ſo far from making a Mock at what is ſo uſeful and indeed abſolutely neceſſary to the Well-being of rational and intelligent Creatures; that, on the contrary, he could not but wiſh earneſtly, that the Proof of it were much clearer and more convincing than he finds it. This, we ſay, would be the Behaviour of a *reaſonable* Perſon, even when he was not ſatisfied of the Truth of Religion. But for Men who do make Profeſſion of Religion, yet at the ſame Time wantonly and profanely to ſcoff at the moſt ſerious and important Parts of the very Religion they profeſs, the Expectation of a future Judgment, and the Rewards and Punishments of another Life; This is, of all others, the abſurdeſt, and the moſt ſtupid Inſtance of Wickedneſs; ſuch as no Perſons can be guilty of, but thoſe whom St. Paul elegantly deſcribes to "have their Conſciences ſeared with a hot Iron." Of whom St. Jude likewiſe prophecies, that "there ſhould be Mockers in the laſt Time, who ſhould walk after their own ungodly Luſts;" And St. Peter alſo, "Scoffers walking after their own Luſts, and ſaying, Where is the Promiſe of his coming?" The Perſons ſpoken of in all theſe Places, are not only profeſſed Unbelievers, but alſo wicked Chriſtians, led, merely by the Practice of Vice, into all Prophaneneſs and Contempt of Religion. Neither are thoſe Men wholly free from the ſame Guilt, who, tho' Themſelves not actual Mockers and Scoffers at Religion, yet by their abſurd and unreaſonable Doctrines, contrary to the neceſſary Perfections of God, and to the eternal Reaſons of Things, or by their vicious Lives and corrupt Practices, "give Occaſion to others to blaſpheme the Name of God." See the Note, Vol. vii. Page 209. Serm. CCLXXXV.

on! (*) but let them know, that there is a God who hears and records them all; and, however they may escape with Impunity here; yet "for all these things, He will assuredly bring them to Judgment" hereafter.

We are expressly assured, that, at the Day of Judgment, "Men shall give an Account of every idle Word they shall speak;" and that, "by our Words we shall be justified, and by our Words we shall be condemned." What Account, then, will Men be able to make of all their blasphemous and profane Discourse; by which we mean not only the Practice of Common-swearing, which can never be too much complained of, but the many other Ways of dishonouring God by disrespectful Language, by ludicrous Expressions, and by bold and profane Reflections on those things which are

(*) ——— —— Know Quem'st ego?

"Thou Dog in Forehead."

——— ——— *Pati hæc inpunè gladiator,*
Rudiarius, furcifer, furca profanè.

[illegible] Men of Honour, of being reckoned Men of Spirit, &c. &c. Pretends & Unintelligents, which in Reality they never had; their Conversation is to the dissolute & menacing Tune, mixed with horrid and foolish Oaths; and all this to be thought Men of Spirit. An astonishing Error indeed, as necessarily reducing them to this Dilemma; if they really mean what they say, they are Brutes; and if they do not, they are Fools for saying it. This, however, is a common Character among young Men. Carefully avoid this Contagion, and content yourself with being calmly and coldly resolute and steady, when you are thoroughly convinced you are in the right; for this is true Spirit. See No. 20. of the Spectator.

are related to him. We need not enlarge on this horrid Practice; it is too well known what Pride and Pleaſure ſome take in Offences of this Kind, as if there was Wit in ridiculing an All-wiſe, or Courage in provoking an Almighty Being. — Again,

Another way of their Heart, is, Intemperance. Permit me here to ſpeak with Freedom:

How common, and almoſt to a Continuance, is the Vice of Inebriety among us! — But,

Is there no Enjoyment but in Exceſs, which drowns all that is reaſonable and becoming?

Miſerable Men! if their Lives had no further Proſpect than this preſent World: but, how much more ſo, as theſe Exceſſes are committed in the Views of Eternity, and "a Judgment to come!"

Exceſſive Love of Pleaſures, is another of the "Ways of their Heart." It is the juſt Character of but too many of them, that "they are Lovers of Pleaſure more than Lovers of God." The Love of Pleaſure (natural to Man in every Period of his Life) glows at this Age with exceſſive Ardor. Novelty adds freſh Charms as yet to every Gratification; Religion is accuſed of inſufferable Severity in precluding Enjoyment; and the Old, when they offer their Admonitions, are upbraided with having forgot that they once were young; yet, to what do the Reſtraints of Religion, and

the Counſels of Age, with Reſpect to Pleaſure, amount? only that we would not hurt, neither ourſelves nor others therein: And, are theſe Reſtraints any other than what a wiſe Man would chuſe to impoſe on himſelf?

We call on Youth not to renounce Pleaſure, but to enjoy it in Safety; inſtead of abridging it, we exhort them to purſue it on a more extenſive Plan: We propoſe Meaſures for ſecuring its Poſſeſſion, and prolonging its Duration. (*)

Religion is no Enemy to the innocent Delights of Life: all that we would be underſtood to mean is only with Relation to thoſe Exceſſes, in this Kind, which young Perſons are manifeſtly inclined to: As, When they indulge Mirth, till they forget Wiſdom: — when carnal Gratifications are the Whole of their Concern; when they abandon themſelves to Senſuality, and think of nothing more than of cheering themſelves "in the Days

(*) There is an Economy that muſt always be obſerved in every Purſuit, Action, and Undertaking. Even our Pleaſures, except uſed with Moderation, prudently varied, and purſued rather as a temporary Relaxation, than as a conſtant Employment, ſoon become inſipid. The moſt innocent Enjoyments have their Bounds. It is a temperate Uſe that conſtitutes the Bliſs, and preſerves thoſe Powers and Faculties, on the proper Exertion of which the Happineſs of this Life depends. — *Artes, ſemper, aut minus tenſus, rumpitur.*

"Good things ceaſe to be good in our Enjoyment of them. Be moderate therefore, and they ſhall remain in thy Poſſeſſion. Let thy Joy be founded on Reaſon, and to its End ſhall Sorrow be a Stranger.

Days of their Youth;" ſaying, (as the Wiſdom of Solomon expreſſeth it) "Come, let us enjoy the good things that are preſent, and let us ſpeedily uſe the Creatures, like as in our Youth.

"Let us fill ourſelves with coſtly Wine and Ointments, and let no Flower of the Spring paſs by us untouched. (*)

"Let us crown ourſelves with Roſe-buds before they be withered.

"Let none of us go without his Part of our Voluptuouſneſs: and let us leave Tokens of our Joy in every Place." (‡) — But,

What will the End of theſe things be, but Horror and Shame, when "for all theſe things God will bring us into Judgment?"

"How long ye ſimple Ones, will ye love Simplicity, and Scorners delight in ſcorning, and Fools hate Knowledge?" repeating the ſame Round of pernicious Follies.

"Look not at the Wine when it is red, when it giveth its Colour in the Cup; for at the laſt it biteth like a Serpent, and ſtingeth like an Adder.

"Remove thy Foot from the ſtrange Woman, and come

(*) *Lapidetur corvis Bacchi, pinguisque Farina,*
Fragor confumere mihi.

(‡) To be at once a Rake, and to glorie in the Character, diſcovers at the ſame Time, a bad Diſpoſition, and a corrupted Taſte.

come not nigh the Door of her Houſe; Let not thine Heart incline to her Ways; for her Houſe is the Way Hell: Thou goeſt after her, as a Bird that haſteth to the Snare, and knoweth not that it is for her Life.

"The Madneſs of Deſire ſhall defeat its own Purſuits; from the Blindneſs of its Rage thou ſhalt ruſh upon Deſtruction.

"The Fountain of Health, which muſt ſupply the Flow of Pleaſure, will quickly be dried up, and every Spring of Joy be exhauſted.

"In the Prime of thy Life, Old-age ſhall overtake thee; and thy Sun ſhall go down in the Morning of thy Days."

How many amiable and promiſing Qualities in Youth are extinguiſhed by the untimely Exceſſes of irregular Pleaſures! — How many flattering Hopes of Parents and Friends are hereby cruelly deſtroyed!

Who but muſt drop a Tear over the Ruins of human Nature, when he beholds that Morning, which aroſe ſo bright, ſetting in ſuch untimely Darkneſs! (*)

Theſe, O ſinful Pleaſure, are thy Trophies! It is thus that, co-operating with the Foe of God and Man, thou

(*) *Accipe, chare Puer, triſti Monumenta Debris,*
Quæ tua quo in Flore hic agis omne malæ
Fugito, ubi obvias ſeeus latet Anguis in Herba;
Et Morſu ſeeva Vipera ſeeva nocet.
Sperne Voluptates, nocet empta Dolore Voluptas;
His dedita, cito Morte ſubacta eris.
The Foundation of, &c. (under)

thou degradeſt human Honour, and blaſteſt the opening Proſpects of human Felicity. (*) But further,

Another prevailing Vice of Youth, is, "miſpending of precious Time. — Time appears to them as a Matter of no preſent Importance, or future Concern, tho Eternity may be the Event of every doubtful Moment. Strange Infatuation indeed!

What Account will they one Day be able to give of ſo many Days and Years ſpent in Vanity? The gay Scene of Pleaſure will not always continue; and, when Time's approaching Night is come, Sin will then have another Aſpect, and will occaſion pale Reviews, and killing Remorſe.

If young Perſons were ſenſible of this, they would ſurely be wiſe in Time, and "number their Days" to better Purpoſe.

This Life will not always laſt, neither will the Sun continue for ever; but, how much more periſhable are we! Let us therefore be wiſe in Seaſon, and depart from the Ways of Vanity, before we are hardened therein; let us "remember our Creator in the Days of our Youth," when moſt acceptable to him, and "before the evil Days come, in which we ſhall ſay, we have no

(*) *Ut Arbores quædam bellæ florent, verùm nullum adferunt Fructum; ita quorundam Puerorum indoles magnam Vitæ Frugem pollicentur, qui simul atque adoleverint, ad ineptiſſimas conversi Voluptates, fallunt Expectationem omnium.* Serm. CCCLXXXV.

come not nigh the Door of her House; Let not thine Heart incline to her Ways; for her House is the Way Hell: Thou goest after her, as a Bird that hasteth to the Snare, and knoweth not that it is for her Life.

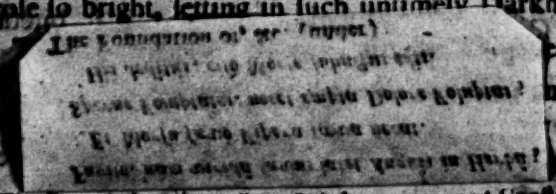
"The Madness of Desire shall defeat its own Pursuits; from the Blindness of its Rage thou shalt rush upon Destruction.

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Who but must drop a Tear over the Ruins of human Nature, when he beholds that Morning, which arose so bright, setting in such untimely Darkness! (*)



The Foundation of an active Old Age, is a good Constitution of the Body, kept in Order, & governed by the Rules of Temperance in Youth; which is the best Provision we can lay in for it; for Intemperance not only "brings gray Hairs," but green Years, "with Sorrow to the Grave."

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This Life will not always laſt, neither will the Sun continue for ever; but, how much more periſhable are we! Let us therefore be wiſe in Seaſon, and depart from the Ways of Vanity, before we are hardened therein; let us "remember our Creator in the Days of our Youth," when moſt acceptable to him, and "before the evil Days come, in which we ſhall ſay, we have no

(*) *Ut arbores quædam bellæ florent, verùm nullum adferunt Fructum; ita quorundam Puerorum indoles magnam Vitæ Frugem pollicentur; qui simul atque adoleverint, ad inepti ſſimas converſæ Voluptates, fallunt Expectationem omnium.* Serm. CCCLXXXV.

no Pleasure in our Sins;" for, thus saith the Lord: "Offer it to me then, will I be pleased with thee? or, will I accept thy Person?" —, Again:

Another prevailing Sin of Youth is, "Obstinacy of Will, and Impatience of Advice." They affect (as the sacred Text intimates) to "walk in their own Ways, and in the Sight of their own Eyes;" they think that their Judgment is as penetrating as others, and therefore want neither Guidance nor Direction. — For, "Who (say they) is Lord over us? (*) But, happy are they

(*) "Restrain your Child; you'll soon believe
"The Text which says, We sprung from Eve."
Vobis invitis, et Amborum ingratiis.
Cui nubi non liceat, justit quodcunque Voluntas?

"The Ways of a Fool are right in his own Eyes; but he that hearkeneth unto Counsel is wise."

"Desire not, therefore, a Multitude of unprofitable Children, neither delight in ungodly Sons. Tho they multiply, rejoice not in them, except the Fear of the Lord be with them. Trust not in their Life, neither respect their Multitude: For One that is just is better than a Thousand; and better it is to die without Children, than to have them that are ungodly. For by One that hath Understanding shall the City be replenished; but the Kindred of the Wicked shall speedily become desolate."

Youth that are not sensible of Shame, are, for the most Part, perverse, ill-natured, and indocile; and, on the contrary, they who are bashful, are most commonly observed to be very ductile and obedient, apt to learn, and easily taught.

Ut in Senibus Intellectus et Morum Facilitas requiritur; sic, in Adolescentibus Obsequium, honestus Pudor, et Obedientia. Honor debetur Deo, Parentibus, et Senioribus Honorum deferre, Castitatem, Clementiam, et Verecundiam spectare.

they who ſeek Wiſdom of the Wiſe, and Experience from Men of Underſtanding; from thoſe whom Time and Practice have made fit Directors.

For, whilſt the former, truſting to his own Guidance, wrecks on every Rock; the latter, by the good Advice of ſkilful Pilots, ſteers clear from every Danger. (*)

Believe me, Dependance and Obedience belong to Youth. Modeſty is one of its chief Ornaments, and has ever been eſteemed a Preſage of riſing Merit.

When entering on the Career of Life, it is not their Part to aſſume the Reins as yet into their Hands, but to commit themſelves to the Guidance of the more experienced, and to become wiſe by the Wiſdom of thoſe who have gone before them. (†) Of

(*) Youth is raſh and precipitant. Whilſt the Blood runs thro the Veins with great Rapidity, the Paſſions are ſtrong and unruly, and the Mind too looſe and airy to be guided by the wiſe Counſel of the Aged; and the Knowledge of themſelves comes often too late to prevent their Ruin.

(†) A certain Term is required to bring great Deſigns to Maturity. Thoſe who can ſtay ſo long are commonly paid with Intereſt for their Patience. Precipitation often ruins the beſt laid Deſigns; whereas Patience ripens the moſt difficult. — *Feſtina lente.*

Canit, nimium properans, cæcos parturit Catulos.

Liberty, unintentionally obtained, is commonly intemperately uſed.

"Let Patience, therefore, have her perfect Work."

Deteriores natura ſumus Licentiâ.

Serm. CCCLXXXV.

Of all the Follies incident to Youth, there is none which either deform its preſent Appearance, or blaſt the Proſpect of its future Proſperity, more than Self-conceit, Preſumption, and Obſtinacy: By checking its natural Progreſs in Improvement, they fix it in long Immaturity, and frequently produce Miſchiefs which can never be repaired:

Yet, theſe are Vices too commonly found among the Young. Big with Enterprize, and elated by Hope, they reſolve to truſt for Succeſs to none but themſelves. Full of their own Abilities, they deride the Admonitions which are given them by their Friends, as the timorous Suggeſtions of Age. Too wiſe to learn, too impatient to deliberate, and too forward to be reſtrained, they plunge with precipitant Indiſcretion, into the midſt of all the Dangers with which Life abounds.

"Seeſt thou, therefore, a Young Man wiſe in his own Conceit? – there is more Hope of a Fool than of him." Poſitive as he now is in his Opinions, and confident in his Aſſertions – the Time will come when both Men and Things will appear to him in a different Light. Many Characters which the Young now admire, will, e'er long, ſink in their Eſteem; and many Opinions, of which they are at preſent moſt tenacious, will alter as they advance in Years. They ſhould therefore, diſtruſt that Glare of youthful Preſumption, which

daz-

dazzles their Eyes; and abound not in their own Senſe; nor put themſelves forward with too much Eagerneſs; nor imagine, that by the Impetuoſity of juvenile Ardour, they can overturn Syſtems which have been long eſtabliſhed, and change the Face of the World.

"Learn not, then, to think more highly of yourſelves than you ought to think; but to think ſoberly."

"A wiſe Man will hear, and will increaſe Learning, and a Man of Underſtanding will attain unto wiſe Counſels: but Fools deſpiſe Wiſdom and Inſtruction."

By patient and gradual Progreſſion in Improvement, you may, in due Time, command laſting Eſteem; but, by aſſuming, at preſent, a Tone of Superiority, to which you have no Title, you will diſguſt thoſe whoſe Approbation it is moſt important to gain. Forward Vivacity may fit you to be the Companions of an idle Hour, but more ſolid Qualities muſt recommend you to the Wiſe, and mark you out for Importance and Conſideration in ſubſequent Life. (*) Again,

Another prevailing Sin of Youth, is, "Forgetfulneſs of God." — "God is not in all their Thoughts."

Though young Perſons are under a particular Obligation

(*) *Vivere ſi recte nescis, decede Peritis.*

"If thou canſt not live well, withdraw from the Company of the Wiſe."

"Hear Counſel, and receive Inſtruction, that thou mayeſt be wiſe in thy latter End." Serm. CCCLXXXV.

gation to "remember their Creator in the Days of their Youth," yet, it is obſervable, that there is no Stage in Life in which they are ſo prone to the contrary.

Tho' they ſo lately came from the Hands of their Maker, yet, how ſoon doth the ungrateful Stream wander in crooked Turnings, till it forgets God, the Fountain from whence it ſo lately flowed, and derived its Original. (*) Whereas,

A Remembrance of, and Piety towards God, is both the Foundation of good Morals, and a Diſpoſition particularly graceful and becoming in Youth. To be void of it, argues a cold Heart, deſtitute of ſome of the beſt Affections which belong to that Age.

Youth is the Seaſon of warm and generous Emotions; the Heart ſhould then ſpontaneouſly riſe into the Admiration of what is great, – glow with the Love of what is fair and excellent, and melt at the Diſcovery of Tenderneſs and Goodneſs; and, where can any Object be found ſo proper to kindle theſe Affections as the Father of the Univerſe, and the Author of all Felicity, the Supporter of our Infancy, and the Guide of our Childhood; and now the Guardian of our Youth, and the Hope of our coming Years.

Let us view religious Homage, therefore, as a natural Expreſſion of Gratitude to God for all his Goodneſs. Let us conſider it as the Service of the "God

(*) *Nil citiùs ſenſcit quàm Gratia.*

of

of our Fathers; of Him, to whom our Parents devoted us; of Him, whom in former Ages our Ancestors honoured; and by whom they are now rewarded, and blessed in Heaven.

Connected with so many tender Sensibilities of the Soul, let Religion be with us, not the cold and barren Offspring of Speculation, but the warm and generous Dictate of our Heart. But,

Though Piety chiefly belongs to the Heart, yet, the Aid of the Understanding is requisite to give a proper Direction to the devout Affections. To this End, let them study the sacred Scriptures, and consult the Word of God, more than the Systems of Men, if they would know the Truth in its native Purity; Let them impress their Minds with Reverence for all that is sacred: Let no Wantonness of youthful Spirits, nor Compliance with evil Customs, ever betray them into Sallies of Profanity. For, besides the Guilt which is thereby incurred, nothing gives a more odious Appearance of Petulance and Presumption to Youth, than the Affectation of treating Religion with Levity. Instead of being an Evidence of superior Understanding, it betrays a poor and shallow Mind, which, vain of the first Smatterings of Knowledge, presumes to make light of what the wisest Part of Mankind have ever revered.

Nor that you are to imagine, that when exhorted to be

be religious, you are called upon to be more formal and solemn in your Manners than others of the same Years, or to erect yourselves into supercilious Reprovers of those around you. No: The Spirit of true Religion breathes Gentleness and Affability. It gives a native and unaffected Ease to the Behaviour. It is social, kind and cheerful; far removed from that gloomy and illiberal Superstition, which clouds the Brow, sharpens the Temper, dejects the Spirit, and teaches Men to fit themselves for another World, by neglecting the Concerns of this.

Let your Religion, on the contrary, connect Preparation for Heaven with an honourable Discharge of the Duties of active Life. Let it be associated into your Imagination with all that is manly and useful; with "whatsoever things are true, just, pure, lovely, and of good Report, wherever there is any Virtue, wherever there is any Praise."

Of such a Religion do you discover, on every Occasion, that you are not ashamed—But, at the same Time, carefully avoid the making any unnecessary Ostentation of it before Men.

Thus have I laid before you some of those Vices which Youth are addicted to, and which are "the Ways of their Heart." I am sensible I might name several others, such as Pride, Passion, scoffing at serious Godliness, and, finally, Uncleanness. These

Theſe are the Follies and Dangers of Youth: but, if the Raſhneſs and Ignorance of that Age be no Excuſe for ſuch a weak Courſe of Life, how much more inexcuſable are they who continue the ſame Practice in their riper Years, and carry their youthful Vices with them to the Grave! — When Experience and Years have improved our Reaſon and Underſtanding, and given us a Judgment of Diſcretion, what a Shame is it that we ſhould deliver ourſelves up to the Government of our Paſſions; and, forgetting the Gravity of our Age, be captivated, like Children, with every trifling Pleaſure and Sin that comes before us!

Charity, indeed, bids us put the beſt Conſtructions upon all things, and to attribute the Vices of the aged to the Infirmities of Age. (*) But,

The Dotage aſcribed to Old-age is, in ſome, not ſo much the Effect of Time, or a returning to, as a continued Stay with, Childhood; (†) for, they that want the Curioſity of furniſhing their Memories with the Rarities of Nature in their Youth, and paſs their Time only in making Proviſion for Eaſe and ſenſual Delight,

(*) *Vitia in Senectutem confert.*

(†) *Nonſum defervit Adoleſcentia*; or rather, the Improvement is backward, *ab Equis ad Aſinos.* Serm. CCCLXXXV.

Delight, are Children still at what Age soever. (*) Wisdom and Virtue are the only Preservatives; and distinguish accordingly. (‡)

Having dealt thus long on the first Particular, I shall very briefly touch on what I am now,

Lastly, To lay before you. — We may take our Course, be gay and vain, and forget God, but "know, that for all these things God will bring us into Judgment."

We are apt to imagine, "because Vengeance against an evil Work is not speedily executed," that "God is such an One as ourselves," either pleased with, or regardless of, our evil Courses; but, there is a Time coming, when an injured "God will no longer keep Silence," but "will reprove us, and set before us the things that we have done," and "will then render to every Man according to his Deeds." "Con-

(*) Virtue, not rolling Years, the Mind matures.
Many die old at Forty, and Children at Four-score.

(‡) *Quæ non fœminatur Puerilis, dum Vir Mentis vigor, sine Dubio sine maturus, dum Autumnus adoleverit. Quidam faciunt Fœcundum Juventus, eadem expectate Messem Senes.* — No Trees bear Fruit in Autumn, unless they blossom in the Spring — To the End, therefore, that our Age may be profitable, we should endeavour that our Youth be studious, and ornamented with Learning & Observation.

Ad discendum quod opus est, nulla Ætas sera videri potest: quod est Senes magis decet docere quam discere, magis tamen decet discere quam ignorare.

"Conſider this, therefore, ye that forget God, Days without Number, leſt He pluck you away, and there be none to deliver you." – If this Argument of a future Judgment were but truly conſidered and underſtood by us, nothing could be of equal Weight with it to control and reſtrain all our irregular and extravagant Courſes.

If Men did but rightly conſider how ſurely near, and particular, this Judgment will be, the Hearts of impenitent Sinners would needs fail them. Even the Heart of a Roman Emperor failed him, yea, "trembled," whilſt Paul, a Priſoner at his Bar, "reaſoned of Righteouſneſs, Temperance, and a Judgment to come."

This Conſideration therefore ſhould, above all things, teach us the Art of right Living. Even the Heathens, who had but an imperfect Light of theſe things, handed down to them by Tradition, yea, what noble Effects did it work in ſome of them! If therefore a clearer Light and Confirmation hereof cannot beget in us an equal or greater Regard hereto, in all Caution of holy Living and ſerious Preparation for it, how ſlighting muſt we be of the higheſt Authority, and inſenſible of our greateſt Intereſt, even beyond the Rate, as it were, of Infidelity itſelf?

To Conclude – "To you, O Men, I call, and my Voice is the Voice of Wiſdom; receive my Inſtruc-

tions, and not Silver; and Knowledge rather than fine Gold; for Wiſdom is better than Riches: therefore get Wiſdom, and with all thy Getting, get Underſtanding; redeeming the Time becauſe the Days are Evil;"

Important Admonitions theſe, enforced by the moſt cogent and momentous Reaſons, and urged upon the tender Mind with the ſtrongeſt Energy and Force, from the alarming and inevitable Conſequences attending the Neglect of them; may they meet with a ſuitable Reception, and excite young Men to actions worthy and commendable!

Say, O ye unthinking Youth, who revel in the Seat of Pleaſure, and "drink of the Spirit of the golden Day," and triumph in Exiſtence! O ſay! what ſolid Happineſs, what permanent Felicity can be found in the Fumes of Intemperance, or the Embraces of the Wanton, which you purſue with ſuch Eagerneſs and Alacrity? Like the Lamia of the Ancients, they allure you (by a fair Outſide and Promiſes of unknown Delights) into Ruin, Poverty, and Deſpair.

Beware of Counterfeits. True Pleaſures are eſtranged to Lewdneſs, Riot, and Diſſipation; they dwell not in the Habitation of Harlots; neither are they to be enjoyed in the entoxicating Fumes of Drunkenneſs.

Let Religion actuate your Hearts, Piety direct your Thoughts, and Charity and Benevolence your Actions;

ons; ſo ſhall true Happineſs and ſolid Pleaſures be your daily Reward; ſo ſhall ye recommend yourſelves to the Approbation of your Maker, and eternal Felicity be your Portion forever.

Time is precious. Boaſt not of to Morrow, for you know not what a Day, what an Hour may bring forth: to Night thy Soul may be required of thee; and if not prepared for the awful Meſſage, never-ending Miſery will aſſuredly be your tremendous Lot; — For, "for all theſe things, God will bring thee into Judgment."

Sermon

SERMON CCCLXXXVI.

The Duties of Youth; in Oppoſition to youthful Follies.

Titus ii. 6. "Young Men exhort to be ſober-minded."

There is ſcarce any Subject of Exhortation ſo neceſſary to Youth, as that which is here recommended by St. Paul. — Alacrity, Emulation, Benevolence, Frankneſs, and Generoſity, are almoſt the natural Growth of that enchanting Age. What it chiefly wants is ſomething to regulate and temper theſe good Qualities; and, to do That is the Province of Sober-mindedneſs. — Accordingly,

Having in the preceding Diſcourſe, inveighed againſt the Follies of Youth, I ſhall here recommend and inculcate the various Duties wherewith they ſhould be more particularly adorned.

"Young Men likewiſe exhort to be ſober-minded."

By Soberneſs of Mind I ſhall include the Whole of that Diſcipline which Religion and Virtue preſcribe to Youth.

Moderation, Vigilance, and Self-government, are

Duties

Duties incumbent on all; but, especially on such as are beginning the journey of Life. To them therefore the Admonition in the Text is, with great Propriety, directed, though there is Reason to fear, that it is in the greatest Hazard of being neglected by them. Experience enforces the Admonition on the most giddy, after they are advanced in Years; (*) but, the whole State of youthful Views and Passions is adverse to it. The Scenes which present themselves, at our entering upon the World, are commonly flattering. Whatever they be of themselves, the lively Spirits of the Young gild every opening Prospect. The Field of Hope appears to stretch wide before them — Pleasure seems to put forth its Blossoms on every Side. Impelled by Desire, forward they rush with inconsiderate Ardour; prompt to decide, and to choose; averse to hesitate, or to enquire; credulous, because untaught by Experience; rash, because unacquainted with Danger; and headstrong, because unsubdued by Disappointment. Hence

(*) *Impubes Pavr, aliquando, Vir bonus evadit.*

As those Bodies are most healthful that break out in their Youth; so many Times, the Souls of Men prove sounder for having vented themselves in their younger Days: None are observed to become greater Enemies of Vice, than those who have been the Slaves of it, and are so blessed and happy as to have broken their Chain, and overcome it. — Wise Men are instructed by Reason—Men of less Understanding, by Experience—the most Ignorant, by Necessity; and Brute-Beasts, by Nature. Serm. CCCLXXXVI.

Hence appears the Propriety of the Injunction before us. "Young Men exhort to be ſober-minded."

Inſtructing Men to "remember their Creator in the Days of their Youth," is laying in their Hearts the only Foundation of every thing good and happy; but the Work is far from being completed, when the Foundation is laid. Not only the general Duties of Life are to be built upon it; but the particular Duties of every One's Condition in Life; for Theſe of all Others we are moſt concerned, and yet often leaſt willing to know and attend to. They ſhould therefore be drawn out, and laid before us as minutely as they well can; and each be called upon to ſtudy thoſe more eſpecially, which he is more eſpecially obliged to practiſe. Now as the ſeveral Tempers, Ranks, and Employments of Men, and the ſeveral Relations they ſtand in to each other, ſo their ſeveral Ages alſo lay them under peculiar Obligations; for which Reaſon St. Peter and St. John in their Epiſtles addreſs themſelves to younger Perſons, and to Elder ſeparately; and St. Paul in this Epiſtle directs Titus to do the ſame thing. But tho both have much need of Admonition, yet the Young plainly need it moſt; as they are juſt entering into the World, with little Knowledge, and leſs Experience, and yet with ſcarcely ever any Diſtruſt; with lively Spirits and warm Paſſions to miſlead them, and Time

to

to go a great Way wrong, if they do not firſt go right. In the Spring-ſeaſon of Life, eſpecially as it advances towards Summer, whatever the Soil produces (and the human Heart is fruitful of Evil) ſhoots out ſo faſt, that a few Days' Neglect occaſions a viſible Alteration for the worſe. And therefore the utmoſt Care ſhould be taken then, to keep all in good Order, by the continual Exerciſe of that Sobriety of Mind, that conſiderate Self-government, which the Apoſtle preſcribes indeed to every One, but which they who principally want it, ought to underſtand as principally preſcribed to them: there being in this Exhortation, nothing unſuitable to their Years, or inconſiſtent with their moſt valuable Enjoyments. It tends to improve their Chearfulneſs, though it may reſtrain their Extravagances; to give the Warmth of their Imagination and the Strength of Underſtanding a right Direction; to ſingle out ſuch Enterprizes for them as are worthy of their natural Vivacity and Ardour; to prevent their Talents and Induſtry from becoming miſchievous, their Pleaſures from proving ruinous, and to render their Purſuit ſubſervient, not only to preſent Delight, but to ſubſtantial and permanent Happineſs.

In treating on this laudable Quality, I ſhall,

Firſt, Shew what we are to underſtand by it, as directed to the Young.

Secondly, The Neceſſity and Propriety of this Exhortation.

Thirdly, The exceeding great Importance and Advantage of their beginning early to give ſerious Attention to their Conduct. And then,

Laſtly, Point out ſome of the ſeveral Reaſons which ought more particularly to influence them hereto.

It is evident that there is both a moral and an intellectual Sobriety; a modeſt Reſerve, a rational Guard upon ourſelves, not only in acting, but in thinking. (*) Ac-

(*) The original Word σωφρονειν, which we tranſlate, *to be ſober-minded*, includes both theſe Kinds of Sobriety; and is uſed indifferently by Authors, to expreſs moſt of the Ways by which ſuch a Mind, or Judgment, exerts itſelf. More frequently it ſignifies to be prudent or diſcreet; at other Times, to be honeſt, chaſte, ſober, temperate, civil, modeſt, moderate, frugal, and the like. The chief Place in the New Teſtament, by which we may determine the Uſe of it there, is Rom. xii. 3. where it has indeed an eſpecial and moſt powerful Energy, of which our Language, not anſwering the elegant Oppoſition in the Words, has thus rendered the Senſe: "*Not to think more highly of himſelf than he ought to think, but to think ſoberly.*"

Agreeably to this, the Verb is commonly rendered, to be ſober; but the Adjective more variouſly, as here in this Chapter, once temperate, and again diſcreet. In the Text, the Verb has been tranſlated with ſome Variety, in the vulgar Latin, to be ſober; in that of Beza, to be temperate; the ſame in the Italian of Diodati; and in the French, by thoſe of the Port Royal, to be diſcreet and regular.

I ſhould not have mentioned theſe ſeveral Verſions, but to do Juſtice to our own; which, doubtleſs, has here an evident Advantage over them all, as it ſhews the Foundation and Principle of the reſt, and equals the Extent of the Original, or even exceeds it in Elegance and Force.

Accordingly, in my Explication of this Quality, I ſhall conſider it,

1ſt. In the Government of the Paſſions. — And,

2dly, In the Government of the Underſtanding.

The firſt and chief thing, in which young People are concerned to ſhew Sobriety of Mind, is in the Government of their Paſſions.

"To flee youthful Luſts" is an Apoſtolical Admonition, not very grateful, perhaps, to youthful Ears; but ſo indiſpenſably requiſite both to temporal and eternal Happineſs, that it muſt, at all Events, and by every poſſible Means, be inculcated and enforced. It comprehends all thoſe irregular Deſires, to the Influence of which is owing much the greateſt Part of the Vice and Miſery that deſolate Mankind. "From whence come Wars and Fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your Luſts, which war in your Members." From whence (may we add) come Murders, Frauds, Breaches of Truſt, Violations of the Marriage-bed, the Ruin of unguarded and unſuſpecting Innocence, the Diſtreſs and Diſgrace of worthy Families, the Corruption and Subverſion of whole Kingdoms? Come they not all from one and the ſame impure Source, from the Violence of headſtrong and unruly Appetites, which, in Purſuit of ſome unlawful Object, burſt through all Reſtraints of Decency, Juſ-

tice, Honour, Humanity, and Gratitude, and throw down every Barrier, however ſacred, that ſtands between them and the Attainment of their End?

The Paſſions, then, muſt be governed, or they will govern us; and, like all other Slaves when in Poſſeſſion of Power, will become the moſt ſavage and mercileſs of Tyrants. But at what Time ſhall we begin to govern them? The very Moment, ſurely, that they begin to raiſe Commotions in the Soul; the Moment we know, from Conſcience, from Reaſon, from Revelation, that the Gratifications they require ought not to be granted. This Period may in ſome be earlier than in others; but it can ſcarce ever be late in any.

There is no Danger of your undertaking ſo arduous and neceſſary a Taſk too ſoon. If you hope to acquire any Authority over your Paſſions, you muſt inure them to early Obedience, and bend them to the Yoke while they are yet pliant and flexible. It will, even then, indeed be a difficult Taſk. But what is there worth having that is to be obtained without Difficulties? They are inſeparable from a State of Probation, and Youth is the proper Time for ſubduing them. In other Inſtances, the Obſtructions you encounter ſerve only to ſtimulate your Induſtry and animate your Efforts; and why then not in this? Be the Diſcouragements what they will, the Conſequence is

not,

not, that you ought to desist from the Attempt, but, that you ought to begin the sooner. For these Obstacles, instead of lessening, will grow upon your Hands; every Moment you delay, will but rivet your Chains the faster, and give Habit Time to strengthen Appetite. —But,

2dly, Another thing, in which young People are concerned to shew Sobriety of Mind, is moderating their natural Fondness for Pleasure; and the two Sorts of Pleasure, from which they are in Danger, are, sensual Gratifications, and gay Amusements.

As to the former, St. Paul hath directed that "Fornication and all Uncleanness be not once named amongst Christians." And the less they are named, even to caution against them, the better: provided it be well understood and considered, that they not only fill the Lives of those who are guilty of them, and of others, with a Variety of temporal Sufferings, too commonly experienced; but fatally indispose them to the Love of God and Virtue, and disqualify them for the spiritual Happiness of the World to come.

Together with the Sins of this Kind, therefore, those of Intemperance in eating and drinking, ought to be carefully shunned, as peculiarly opposite to the Character of Sober-minded, by young People; who of all others have the least need of such Indulgence, and are

the moſt hurt by them; as they ſubject them to painful and dangerous Diſeaſes; expoſe them to early Diſtreſs in their Circumſtances; and beſides, for the moſt Part, either ſink them into Stupidity and Inſignificance, or raiſe them into Wildneſs and Madneſs, frequently followed by proportionable Dejection and Melancholy. Therefore, inſtead of ſuch Exceſs, they muſt, (as St. Paul further directs,) "keep under the Body, and bring it into Subjection," not by hurtful or fanciful Auſterities, but by rational Self-denial; remembering, that even in common Exerciſes and Conteſts of Strength and Activity, "every Man, that ſtriveth for the Maſtery, is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible Crown, but we an incorruptible."

The other Sort of Pleaſures, eſpecially dangerous to young People, are gay Amuſements. Undoubtedly Cheerfulneſs is as innocent, as it is amiable: it may and ſhould be expreſſed by thoſe that have it, and allowed and encouraged by thoſe who have it not, for it both gives Delight, and doth Good. The Diſpoſition to it was unqueſtionably planted in us by our Maker, with Intent that it ſhould be gratified; and Youth is plainly the natural Seaſon for it. But ſtill, all this by no Means exempts it from Diſcipline and Government.

Love of Pleaſure is undeniably one Part of our Nature:

ture: but Sense of Duty, and Concern for lasting Happiness, are as evident and much more important Parts; yet we must often trample upon these, if we always follow that Immoderate Desires of present Gratification, if we suffer them to be constantly soliciting us, will frequently prevail when they ought not; and hurry us on suddenly, or intice us gradually, to such Lengths as we never intended; possibly till our Heart is totally corrupted, and the Case of our Conduct intirely altered. How many are there, who, setting out with nothing worse than a thoughtless Passion for Diversion and Entertainment, have grievously, may perhaps irrecoverably, injured, in a few Years, some their Healths or Fortunes, others their Character and Peace of Mind; and wasted upon the Reminders of their Days, Pain and Want, Remorse and Shame.

Think then awhile, you that are young, and have Pity on yourselves. Shall all this fine and active Strength, this Affluence of Animal Spirits, this Relish of Mirth and Openness of Face, this delightful Prospect of being esteemed and happy through the whole of Life; shall it, merely for Want of a little Self-restraint, be cast away in the very Entrance upon Life, and exchanged for Guilt and Misery, to abide with you during the rest of it? For these are natural Fruits of such Neglect; and it is the weakest Vanity to hope that you

shall escape better than others, unless you keep safe from their Paths.

Or, suppose your come off ever so much better than you had Cause to expect; still making Pleasure your main Business must hinder you, first from preparing for, then from attending to, the proper Employments of your Station; by which alone you must be great Sufferers, and probably others besides you. But further; indulging, and, by Indulgence, adding Force, to Desires of this Kind, spoils and vitiates the inward Frame. They who must always have somewhat extremely delicious to fill up their Hours, reject as flat and tasteless a Number of things, with which others are very well entertained. What they themselves were entertained with once, after a while grows cloying; and as the World is not formed to afford exquisite Novelties frequently, they have miserable Intervals of eager willing for Delight, which, if they seem now and then to obtain, their Satisfaction in them soon dendens to nothing. Human Nature is not fitted to support a perpetual Round of Jollity and Mirth; tho it may appear at first to raise and enliven, yet, (generally speaking,) it soon sinks us down into a deplorable State of Languor and Lowness; from which at length the most pernicious Augmentation of Remorse will scarce afford them a Moment's Relief. Be

Be persuaded therefore, to look forward a little, and attend to Consequences. Let the Love of Pleasure importune you ever so strongly; still, how delightful soever the Draught is, to swallow it can never be all, that a thirsty Person hath to consider. It must be a much more material Question, whether no Mischief will ensue. Mistake not the Beginning of Life for the whole: Providence in great Wisdom hath furnished every Period of it with proper Satisfactions of its own, and proper Employments for the Service of the next. Youth is to prepare us for the comfortable Enjoyments of Manhood; Manhood for that of Old-age; each Part of our Existence on Earth for the Blessedness of Heaven. — Second the Intention, pursue the Direction of your gracious Maker; and be assured you will never find your Account in contradicting it. You relish only such and such things at present; but provide for the Feelings you will have hereafter; and, like those who are to travel through different Climates, lay in for them all, what the Knowing and Prudent advise. Suppose in your Childhood you had done whatever was most agreeable to you, and nothing else, how sad a Figure must your Youth have made! and just as contemptible and wretched will your riper Age be, if you follow that Rule now.

Or could you escape all Inconveniences here from

ſuch Behaviour; yet, as you cannot think this even a moral, much leſs a religious Manner of Life, you may be ſure it muſt end ill hereafter. You were created, not merely to pleaſe yourſelves, but to ſerve your Fellow-creatures, and honour your Maker. You have Faculties given you for theſe Purpoſes; you are to account for the Uſe of them. They are become by the Fall of our firſt Parents weak and inſufficient; you have uſed them ill; and made your Condition yet worſe. A Method of Pardon and Recovery is offered to you; but offered on Terms of deep Repentance, humble Faith in a Redeemer, diligent Care to preſerve yourſelves from Sin, and to improve yourſelves in Goodneſs: eternal Rewards are promiſed to ſuch as thus become qualified for them; and eternal Puniſhments are threatened to thoſe, who diſobey.

Allow yourſelves, therefore, in fit Inſtances of Pleaſure, at fit Seaſons, to a fit Degree; and enjoy them with a merry Heart! but never let the Thought of living to Pleaſure get the leaſt Poſſeſſion of you. Be induſtrious to check ſo abſurd and deſtructive an Imagination, by diligent Application to ſome proper Buſineſs, and fixing a frequent Return of Hours devoted to retired and ſerious Recollection. The mere Compoſure and Quiet of them will be no ſmall Advantage to you; but you will find it a much greater, to ſtop from

Time

Time to Time, and ſee where-abouts you are; to conſider whether you are fallen into no wrong Courſe; whether you make any Progreſs in the right; whether any Danger be near, whether you are taking the beſt Method to avoid it. No Joy on Earth can exceed that of anſwering theſe Queſtions well. And if any thing be otherwiſe than well, knowing it is the only Way to mend it, and That, the only Way to inward Peace: of which our gracious God and Father is willing that they, who have moſt offended him, ſhould, on their ſincere Repentance and Reformation, immediately partake. Therefore often examine your own Condition: and at ſuch Times alſo, turn off your Eyes a little from the gay Scenes of Life; take the other Parts of it into View, and conſider on the whole, what this World is: A very different Place from what thoſe who are intoxicated with youthful Warmth and ſanguine Expectations, for a while imagine it to be. Set therefore in your View the Diſappointments and Perplexities, the Cares and Fatigues, the Pains and Sorrows, of which you amongſt the reſt of Mankind muſt undergo your Share: and while the Appearance of things is brighteſt, as the wiſe King directs, "remember the Days of Darkneſs, for they ſhall be many." Not that you are to break your Spirits or damp your Activity, by melancholy Proſpects and Apprehenſions; but only to

compoſe your Hearts into a State ſuitable to that which you live in, and form your Minds to be content with few and leſs Enjoyments from the things around you: for in ſuch a World as this, it is certain Miſery to aim at high Happineſs.

Still Prudence may ſecure you a good Degree of Comfort here; and Religion will exalt it into Joy. For to the pious Soul Light will ariſe out of Darkneſs; and all the Vanity and Vexation of the preſent Life give Aſſurance to thoſe, who go through it as they ought, and God will make them ample Amends in a better. Therefore in your Hours of private Meditation, fail not to renew the Remembrance of your Creator; think of all you enjoy as his Gift; think of all his Laws as kind and neceſſary Proviſions for your temporal or eternal Welfare; think of every Tranſgreſſion as the groſſeſt Folly, mixed with the baſeſt Ingratitude.

Fervent Devotion from a pure Heart is undoubtedly the moſt pleaſing of all Employments; for it is the Exerciſe of the ſweeteſt Affections, Hope and Love, on the worthieſt of Objects; a Being infinitely able, and equally attentive, to reward our Attachments to him, to defend us from every real Evil, to beſtow on us every real Good, and in due Time the full Enjoyment of the ſupreme Good, Himſelf. Warm

Warm your Hearts, therefore, with these delightful Sentiments; and you will never repine at any needful Restraints from earthly Gratifications. Only preserve in your Piety itself that Soberness of Mind, which is requisite in every thing; that it may not fly out into Raptures of Enthusiasm, or Zeal without Charity; but may be uniformly rational, mild, and beneficent.

This Article of moderating their Love of Pleasure, is of such singular Importance to the Young, that the Enlargement here may be well allowed. (*) — But,

3dly, A third Instance, in which they have great need to be sober-minded, is, their Desire of imitating others; and doing many things in Compliance with Fashion, to which they would otherwise have no Inclination. Now, conforming to those around us in Points of Indifference, is one commendable Part of social Behaviour. And moderately absurd Customs, if they be harmless, it is very allowable, when once they become general, to follow and despise at the same Time. But if you find yourselves growing really fond of such things, running to the utmost Lengths of them, and building to yourselves a Kind of Reputation upon them; then it is high Time to retreat. For attending to Trifles will take off, in Proportion, your Attention to

(*) See Vol. xvi. Page 66, &c. on inordinate Pleasures.

compose your Hearts into a State suitable to that which you live in, and form your Minds to be content with few and less Enjoyments from the things around you: for in such a World as this, it is certain Misery to aim at high Happiness.

Still Prudence may secure you a good Degree of Comfort here; and Religion will exalt it into Joy. For to the pious Soul Light will arise out of Darkness; and all the Vanity and Vexation of the present Life give Assurance to those, who go through it as they ought, and God will make them ample Amends in a better. Therefore in your Hours of private Meditation, fail not to renew the Remembrance of your Creator; think of all you enjoy as his Gift; think of all his Laws as kind and necessary Provisions for your temporal or eternal Welfare; think of every Transgression as the grossest Folly, mixed with the basest Ingratitude.

Fervent Devotion from a pure Heart is undoubtedly the most pleasing of all Employments; for it is the Exercise of the sweetest Affections, Hope and Love, on the worthiest of Objects; a Being infinitely able, and equally attentive, to reward our Attachments to him, to defend us from every real Evil, to bestow on us every real Good, and in due Time the full Enjoyment of the supreme Good, Himself. Warm

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3dly, A third Instance, in which they have great need to be sober-minded, is, their Desire of imitating others; and doing many things in Compliance with Fashion, to which they would otherwise have no Inclination. Now, conforming to those around us in Points of Indifference, is one commendable Part of social Behaviour. And moderately absurd Customs, if they be harmless, it is very allowable, when once they become general, to follow and despise at the same Time. But if you find yourselves growing really fond of such things, running to the utmost Lengths of them, and building to yourselves a Kind of Reputation upon them; then it is high Time to retreat. For attending to Trifles will take-off, in Proportion, your Attention to

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to Matters of Moment; and if your Eſteem be miſ-placed, your Lives will be miſled. But, above all, beware of yielding, where it may more immediately endanger your Innocence; beware of that Indifference to Religion and religious Duties, which of late hath appeared ſo peculiarly infectious; beware of being led inſenſibly into ſuch a Turn of Talk and Behaviour, ſuch Methods of employing your Thoughts and your Time, (however polite they are accounted,) as may weaken your Regard to the Principles of Virtue. Always examine the Rules of Cuſtom by thoſe of God's Word, of Reaſon and Experience; and where you have Cauſe to diſtruſt your own Judgment, adhere to that of prudent Friends, if need were, againſt the World. But indeed it is generally a ſmall Part of the World, a few forward empty People, that make the high Vogue in every thing, and are followed thoughtleſsly by others. Be not deceived, therefore, by the Self-ſufficiency, the Noiſe and vain Shew, of Wretches like theſe; nor ever miſtake their Opinion for the Senſe of Mankind; but be aſſured, many more will eſteem you for right Conduct, than wrong; and even the ſilent Approbation of the Wiſe and Good will do you much more Service than the loudeſt Applauſes of the inconſiderate and libertine Part of Mankind. You may be afraid, perhaps, of the Cenſure or Ridicule of

the

the latter: but only take care to be pious and regular without Oſtentation or Scruples, and by acquiring, as far as you can, every laudable Accompliſhment, to make amends for wanting that of being wicked; and there will be little Doubt of your receiving much better Quarter from Men, than they commonly give one another. At leaſt, if you cannot prevent their Scorn, ſurely you may ſtand againſt it, and deſpiſe it; or, if your Mind is too tender for that, as in ſome young People it is, you have another Remedy, as obvious and eaſy as it is neceſſary [viz] to keep out of the Way of hearing it. Allow the moſt agreeable Perſons, that would weaken your Senſe of Duty, as little Familiarity with you as you can: and ſtrengthen yourſelves in Goodneſs continually, by the Example, the Countenance, the Encouragement, and Advice, of ſerious, diſcreet, and amiable Companions. (*)

Thirdly, A fourth thing which due Sobriety of Mind requires, eſpecially of the Young, is to avoid Affectation; pretending, and endeavouring without Cauſe, to be what they are not, and to like or diſlike what they naturally do not.

While any thing continues in Faſhion, they, beyond others, are hurried away by a ſtrange Deſire of appearing

(*) See the Fickleneſs of Faſhion, Vol. II. Page 27, 28.

ing much fonder of it, not only than there is ground to be, (which belongs to the laſt Head,) but than they really are; and often behave fooliſhly, and ſometimes wickedly, to expreſs their Paſſion for things, which at the Bottom they have none for; at leaſt hardly any other, than what they took up, merely becauſe they thought it looked well; and can eaſily lay down again at the ſhorteſt Warning, as Experience ſhews, and be juſt as highly delighted with any thing elſe. (*) Now, Plainly

(*) As bad as the World is, we may find, by a ſtrict Obſervation upon Virtue and Vice, that if Men appeared no worſe than they really are, there would be much leſs Work for Reformation than there is, as Matters are but too commonly ordered; for they have generally taken up an inverted Ambition, and affect even Faults and Imperfections of which they are innocent.

Affectation has been defined to be "an awkward and forced Imitation of what ſhould be genuine and eaſy, wanting the Beauty that accompanies what is natural;" becauſe there is always a Diſagreement between the outward Action and the Mind within.

Nature does nothing in vain; the Creator of the Univerſe has appointed every thing to a certain Uſe and Purpoſe, and determined it to a ſettled Courſe and Sphere of Action, from which if it in the leaſt deviate, it becomes unfit to anſwer thoſe Ends for which it was deſigned. Now, as Virtue is an interior Beauty, ſo is Beauty an exterior Virtue; yet we ſee, that it may, in great Meaſure, be either deformed, or loſe a great Part of its Brilliancy, by Affectation and ill Taſte. It is, doubtleſs, to the impertinent Affectation of excelling in Characters Men are not fit for, and for which Nature never deſigned them, is generally owing moſt of the Abſurdity and Ridicule we meet with in the World. Plain and rough Nature is much better

Plainly such as these prostitute their Share of good Sense

better than an artificial Ungracefulness, and studied Ways of being ill-fashioned. The Want of an Accomplishment, or some Defect in our Behaviour, coming short of the utmost Gracefulness, often escapes Observation and Censure; but Affectation in any Part of our Carriage, is raising a Light to discover our Defects, and never fails to make us to be taken notice of, either as wanting Sense, or wanting Sincerity.

It is one Part and Symptom of Affectation, when a Man would outwardly put on a Disposition of Mind, which then really he hath not, but endeavours, by a forced Carriage, to make a Show of yet so, that the Constraint he is under, discovers itself; thus a Man sometimes affects to appear sad, merry, or kind, when, in Truth, he is not so.

Affectation, indeed, is a Disease which breaks out upon us in various Kinds; It sometimes shews itself in Dress & Habit, sometimes in our Features and Mein of our Face, often in our Actions and Deportment of the Body, and too frequently in our Words and Conversation. Each Species of it subjects a Man to a Proportion of Ridicule; but the Stiffness and affected Pedantry of Expression makes him most the Object of Contempt, when they lose both the Profit and the Reputation of good Thoughts, by the uncouth Manner of expressing them, when they love to talk in Mystery, and take it for a Mark of Wisdom not to be understood; and are so fond of making themselves publick, that they will rather be ridiculous, than not be taken Notice of.

Every Person hath one or more Qualities which may make him useful both to himself and to others: Nature never fails of pointing them out; and while the Infant continues under her Guardianship, she brings him on in his Way, and then offers herself for a Guide in what remains in the Journey: If he proceed in that Course, he can scarcely miscarry; Nature makes good her Engagements; for,

Senſe to whatever happens to be the reigning Folly.

And as ſhe never promiſes, what ſhe is not able to perform, ſo ſhe never fails of performing what ſhe promiſes—But the Misfortune is, Men deſpiſe what they may be Maſters of, and affect what they are not fit for, they reckon themſelves already poſſeſſed of what their Genius inclined them to, and ſo bend all their Ambition to excel in what is out of their Reach. If Men would be content to graft upon Nature, and aſſiſt her Operations, what mighty Effects might we expect! whereas, by affecting what we have not, (i.e) more, or otherwiſe than as Nature deſigned us, Men not only loſe a good Quality, but alſo contract a bad one; they not only are unfit for what they were deſigned, but they oblige themſelves to what they are unfit for; and inſtead of making a very good Figure One Way, make a very ridiculous one Another. It is to Affectation the World owes its whole Race of Coxcombs: Nature, in her whole Drama, never drew ſuch a Part; ſhe has ſometimes made a Fool; but a Coxcomb is always of a Man's own making, by applying his Talents otherwiſe than Nature deſigned; who ever bears an high Reſentment for being put out of her Courſe, and never fails of taking her Revenge on thoſe that do ſo.

Affectation ſooner diſcovers what we are, than makes known what we would appear to be: and we are never made ſo ridiculous for the Want of Qualities, as by thoſe we affect to have. Could the World, therefore, be reformed to the Obedience of that famed Dictate, *Follow Nature*, which the Oracle of Delphos pronounced to Cicero, when he conſulted what Courſe of Studies he ſhould purſue, we ſhould ſee almoſt every Man as eminent in his proper Sphere, as Tully was in his; and ſhould, in a very ſhort Time, ſee Impertinence and Affectation, with falſe Characters, baniſhed from among us. Imitation of others, without diſcerning what is graceful in them, or what is peculiar to their Characters, or our own, often makes a great Part of our Faults. — Affectation, of all Kinds, whether of

Speech,

And there are too many others, who, though perhaps very

Speech, Gesture, or Dress, is always offensive; because we have naturally an Aversion to whatever is fictitious, and condemn those who have nothing better to recommend themselves by, than counterfeit Perfection. No Man is ridiculous for being what he is, but only for the Affectation of being something more. No Man is awkward by Nature, but by affecting to be genteel. A Man, born in the meanest State, is by no Means awkward in the Exercise of his Trade, but would be exceedingly ridiculous, if he attempted the Air and Graces of a Man of Fashion. Nature may be cultivated and improved, both as to Body and Mind; but it is not to be extinguished by Art; and all Endeavours of this Kind are absurd, and an inexpressible Fund for Ridicule.

Spectatum admissi, Risum teneatis, Amici?

Not a Muscle should move, were all Horace's Friends admitted to see us at Dinner, debarred all Hopes and Pretences of Quarrelling.

Your Body and Mind must be at Ease, to be agreeable; but Affectation is a particular Restraint, under which no Man can be genteel in his Carriage, or pleasing in his Conversation. As neither your Motions or Appearance would be easy or graceful, in the Habit of another who was fatter or taller than yourself; just so it is with the Mind, if you affect a Character that does not fit you, and that Nature never intended for you.—Take-heed, therefore, how you disguise yourself to copy others. Stick to Nature if you desire to please; for whatever is fictitious and affected, is always insipid and disgustful. There is a Mean in all things, *Captus ne placuisse nimis.* —Indeed, Affectation is not only a downright Folly and Deformity, but, as it is a Repugnancy to Nature, and an Opposition to the Disposition of Providence, it is certainly a Crime. By forming themselves on fantastic Models, the Young begin with being ridiculous, and often end with being vicious.

Affectation in Gesture, Speech, or Manners, is often the Effect of Pride or Hypocrisy, of Idleness or Indifference; for as Vanity

very zealous againſt theſe public Affectations, have their private Ones, to which they allow full Scope.

I am ſenſible, that Matters of this Nature may ſeem beneath the Notice of a ſerious Divine: but nothing is ſo, which produces real Evils in Life. It is very true, in young Minds, as in warm and light Soils, innumerable Weeds will ſpring up. But if they are nurſed and cheriſhed, inſtead of being rooted out, they will exhauſt the Ground, and choak the good Seed. Therefore examine whatever you perceive within you, rather with the greater Care for its being of your own Growth: and never tolerate ſtrong Fancies with weak Reaſons for them. Do not imagine things graceful, or important, or proper, without knowing why; or that you can ever make them ſo, if they are not ſo; or that

puts on affecting falſe Characters, ſo Hypocriſy ſets as on an Endeavour to avoid Cenſure by concealing our Vices, under an Appearance of their oppoſite Virtues: much Buſineſs, and a due Application to ſerious Affairs oblige us to keep to Nature. Terence expreſſeth this ſtrongly in different Characters, public and private, of Female Conduct; — *Dùm Foris ſunt, nihil videtur mundius,*

Neque magis compoſitum quidquam, nec magis elegans;
Quæ cum Amatore ſuo cùm cenſent, ligurient.
Harum videre Luxuriem, Sordes, Impiam,
Quàm inhoneſta ſola ſunt Domi, atque avida Cibi,
Quo Pacto ex Jure, baſterno Panem atrum vorent;
Noſce hæc omnia, Salus eſt Adoleſcentibus.

See Knox's Eſſays, No. 162, on Affectation of extreme Delicacy and Senſibility. See alſo No. 38, of the Spectator.

that any Way whatever, of thinking, behaving, or appearing, is in the leaſt the better for your adopting it. Some perhaps may for a while, injudiciouſly or artfully, applaud your Peculiarities; they may procure you much Notice, and ſeemingly of a favourable Kind; but this will never end well. You will get a wrong Bias, and loſe the true Notion of the Value of things, you will lay yourſelves open to the Deſigns of the crafty, fall into Contempt with the diſcerning, and by Degrees with every one. Youth indeed hath Advantages, which may partly conceal, partly excuſe, theſe Abſurdities: but then they will fix upon you, and remain with you, after every thing that can palliate them is gone. You will have put on a Character, under a falſe Notion of its becoming you, and not know how to lay it aſide, even when it becomes really ridiculous.

Sermon

SERMON CCCLXXXVII.

On the ſame Subject.

Tit. ii. 6. "Young Men exhort to be ſober-minded."

In my Explication of the excellent Quality of Sober-mindedneſs, here enjoined on Young Men, I have already conſidered it as reſtraining the Paſſions of Men, whether in ſenſual Gratifications or gay Amuſements; But, as this is not the whole or full Import of this amiable Quality, but it extends alſo to the Regulation of the Underſtanding, as well as the Affections, I ſhall proceed accordingly. — And,

1ſt. The firſt Particular comprehended under the general Direction for young People, (in the Light we are now to conſider it,) is, that they "do not think of themſelves more highly than they ought to think, but to think ſoberly."

Livelineſs and Want of Experience peculiarly diſpoſe them to err in this Point; and the Diſregard to all Authority, human and divine, and the Liberty and Practice of ſaying and doing what every One pleaſes, that prevail in the preſent Age, have heightened and

ſpread

ſpread the Error to Degrees never known before. Hence they perpetually deſpiſe the moſt uſeful Qualifications, and the worthieſt Behaviour; admire Trifles, Follies, and Sins, as Diſtinctions and Excellencies; claim a high Merit for Accompliſhments of which they have little or no Share; imagine themſelves totally free from Defects that are moſt glaringly viſible in them; pity and ſcorn thoſe whom they have more Cauſe to envy: and thus, judging falſely, in the moſt dangerous Manner, of things and Perſons, of others and themſelves, are utterly miſled in the main Concerns of Life. Yet they fail not to ſee, but take a Pride in obſerving, from Time to Time, that this is the Caſe of ſuch and ſuch of their Acquaintance. Now,

Would they but reflect, that it may be their own too, it would be no inconſiderable Step towards a Cure. It muſt put them on examining what Advantages and good Qualities they are really poſſeſſed of, what the real Value of them is, what Deductions are to be made from them on Account of Imperfections and Failings, and what Ground they have, on the whole, to hope for the Eſteem of wiſe Men, and the Acceptance of an all-wiſe God. It muſt remind them to conſider the haſty Judgments of their early Days, and review, with a ſuſpicious Eye, perhaps many Notions which they are now very well ſatisfied in, without knowing why, and

are proceeding to act upon at all Adventures.

Moſt People, indeed, ſhould have more Diffidence than they have, but the Young much more than others. It is not natural, it is not poſſible, that, in the very Entrance of Life, One, who hath taken no Pains to know any thing, ſhould know every thing. And therefore, when ſuch are found, as they are every Day, perfectly contented with themſelves; abſolutely clear, that their own Way of thinking and acting, whatever it chances to be, is right; when they will venture in Queſtions of the greateſt Moment, to decide, without the leaſt Heſitation before-hand, or the leaſt Doubt afterwards, perhaps directly contrary to what the ableſt Perſons in all Ages have done; and hold every one in utter Contempt, that can poſſibly be of another Opinion; This is ſurely an aſtoniſhing Want of Soberneſs of Mind.

At leaſt, be a little modeſt, till you can truly ſay, that you have conſidered & enquired with ſome Care: for afterwards, in all likelihood, you will be ſo of Courſe. Eſpecially be modeſt, in Proportion as any Point is of Conſequence, and out of your Reach.

For Inſtance, in Religion. The Duties of it are plain, and plainly reaſonable. So are the Doctrines too, as far as we can underſtand them, and judge of them: but we can underſtand and judge of ſome of them but very imperfectly. They relate to the infinite Nature

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of God, to the boundleſs Views of his Providence, to future Times, it may be a future World. No Wonder, that of ſuch things we do not comprehend the Whole; though he may have good Reaſons, whether we perceive them or not, for telling us only a Part: and yet, without comprehending the Whole, ſome Parts muſt ſeem inaccountable. Now ſuch Difficulties as theſe, or poſſibly leſs; a raw ſelf-ſufficient Youth chances to think or be told of, retains, and derides the Weakneſs of thoſe who believe what they are taught. Should they not rather learn to ſuſpect, that they have not a ſufficient Acquaintance with the Subject? For what will become of good Senſe and right Behaviour in the World, if People are to think themſelves Maſters of every thing which they know but any thing of, and to deſpiſe every thing they know nothing of? This is both a very unreaſonable and very immoral Turn of Mind: it deſtroys all Reverence for Truth, all Attention to the virtuous Conduct of their Faculties and their Lives: it leads them, for the moſt Part, to early Miſery here, and hardens them beyond all things againſt that penitent Conviction, which alone can prevent their Miſery hereafter. Juſtly therefore doth the Prophet denounce: "Wo unto them that call Evil Good, and Good Evil; that put Darkneſs for Light, and Light for Darkneſs. Wo unto them that are wiſe in their

own Eyes, and prudent in their own Sight. Therefore, as the Fire devoureth the Stubble, and the Flame conſumeth the Chaff; ſo their Root ſhall be as Rottenneſs, and their Bloſſom go up as the Duſt; becauſe they have caſt away the Law of the Lord of Hoſts, and deſpiſed the Word of the Holy One of Iſrael."

adly, Another Duty is, that how well ſoever they may apprehend they ſee Cauſe to think of themſelves, they ſhould behave with Humility towards thoſe with whom they have any Intercourſe; and remember that, in young People above all, Modeſty is exceedingly graceful, and a remarkable Want of it ſhocking. It is not meant that they ſhould be diſconcerted in what they ſay or do before Strangers and Superiors: this would be a Weakneſs indeed; though, when it doth not go very far, an amiable One. Much leſs is it meant to enjoin ſo ſtrict a Silence or Reſerve, as may bring the Goodneſs of their Underſtandings or Tempers into Queſtion: but only, that their Words, Looks, and Actions, ſhould expreſs a Conſciouſneſs of what is very true, that they have Reaſon, from their Youth and Inexperience, to be in ſome Degree ſuſpicious of themſelves, even where they ſeem to be moſt plainly in the right. Still, what they are fully convinced, on deliberate Conſideration, is their Duty, they muſt adhere to, ſo long as the Perſuaſion continues; though Perſons,

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ever ſo much further advanced in Age or Knowledge, diſſuade them from it. But even in this Caſe, and certainly then in others, they ought to ſhew every Mark of due Regard to thoſe from whom they differ. And the moſt obliging Submiſſion is very conſiſtent with Livelineſs and Spirit: it may give ſtrong Proofs of Dignity, at the ſame Time with Reſpect; and, by throwing the moſt advantageous Light on every Accompliſhment, it will pleaſe every One worth pleaſing, beyond all things. (*)

It is very true, that quite different Methods, a confident Behaviour, and a Manner, in Converſation, bold even to great Lengths of Indecency, ſeem to take with too many: even with ſome, who cover their Ignorance or Neglect of true good Breeding and Politeneſs, with high Pretences to both. But then, as the Liking which they have, or pretend to have, for theſe undaunted Spirits can be accompanied with no real Eſteem, ſo it ſeldom holds long; and yet ſeldomer produces any good to thoſe who are diſtinguiſhed by it. For Perſons of Judgment will by no Means pitch on thoſe for any Purpoſe of Importance, with whoſe empty Forwardneſs they are moſt diverted for an idle Hour. The very Quality, that recommends them in this latter Reſpect, is an inſuperable Objection againſt them in the former. — Again, Ano-

(*) See the Note, Vol. viii. Page 313. Serm. 387

Another thing to be obſerved, which in our Youth, at leaſt, we commonly overlook; is that they, who love to be often placing themſelves in full View, whatever Care they take about Appearance, are apt to have more ſeen of them, than is to their Advantage. And this Danger is the greater, as whoever deſires too earneſtly to make the beſt Figure he can, will almoſt certainly be carried on to aim at making a better than he can, and of Conſequence will make a much worſe than he need. Great Numbers, who might have paſſed through Life with abundantly ſufficient Approbation and Regard, by the mere Help of plain good Senſe and good Temper, have, by affecting more Agreeableneſs or Sprightlineſs, more Judgment or Knowledge, perhaps than they had, or however than they had Occaſion to ſhew, become ridiculous to thoſe whom they wanted to think highly of them. But a further and more ſerious Evil, is, that where the Paſſion for being remarkable is permitted to grow very ſtrong, if laudable Methods will not bring it about, People are exceedingly tempted to uſe others: to procure Admiration of their Perſons by improper Arts and Freedoms, of their Learning by Aſſertions of groundleſs Novelties, of their Wit by Ill-nature or Profaneneſs. — And yet, after all, generally ſpeaking, theſe Contrivances prove inſufficient. Deſigns laid for Applauſe, are almoſt always

ways ſeen; and ſo diſguſt thoſe who ſee them, that they often refuſe real Merit its due Acknowledgments, when they are too openly claimed. Sometimes, indeed, theſe vain Characters do puſh themſelves into early Reputation, without any Title to it. But, as their haſty Growth is unaccompanied with inward Strength, after being a ſhort Time gazed at and envied, they are cruſhed under the Weight of their own Fame, and ſink back into nothing; while every one rejoices at the Fall, and wonders how they came ever to riſe ſo high in the Eſteem of the World.

On all Accounts, therefore, Young Men ought ever to expreſs, in their whole Converſation and Conduct, a moderate Opinion and Diſtruſt of themſelves; with no ſmall Eſteem and Deference for others, how far ſoever they may be from making a ſhowey Appearance. For ſtill, ſuch Perſons may have a great Deal more even of ornamental Accompliſhments, to produce on fit Occaſions, than you are aware of. Or ſuppoſing them not at all comparable to you in theſe Reſpects, they may excel you in much more important things, in good Conduct, Virtue, and Piety. Whatever Advantages you have over any One beſides theſe, remember it depends entirely on your Uſe of them, whether you ſhall be the better or the worſe for them: and be aſſured, they will never be truly beneficial to you, with-

out Humility of Heart and proper Behaviour. Inſtead therefore, of the unprofitable and unſafe Employment of admiring yourſelves, and endeavouring to make others admire you, for Qualities of ſmall and doubtful Value, indulge but a moderate Complacence in the very beſt that you conceive you are poſſeſſed of; think how imperfect you are in them, how many others you want, how many bad ones you have; and far from cheriſhing the poor Vanity of vying with thoſe around you, proſtrate yourſelves before God, and earneſtly beſeech him to "turn his Face from your Sins, and put out all your Miſdeeds; to make you a clean Heart, and renew a right Spirit within you."

Another Duty, comprehended under Sobriety of Mind, and cloſely connected with the former, conſiſts in avoiding inconſiderate and vehement Poſitiveneſs in Diſcourſe; to which the Young, who think well of their own Judgments, and know little of what others have judged or on what Grounds, are much addicted.

Now, affirming any thing, as more certain than you have good Cauſe to believe it, is really an Offence againſt Truth, tho you ſhould happen to be in the right; and peculiarly unbecoming in thoſe, who are moſt likely to be often in the wrong. Inſiſting on a Point too earneſtly ſometimes provokes very dangerous Reſentments, eſpecially when two of the ſame warm Temper

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are of different Perſuaſions. (*) And cooler and wiſer Men will ſeldom care to venture upon giving you Information, when they ſee you ſo little diſpoſed to receive it. For Want of ſuch Monitors, you will often go on, for a long Time, aſſerting as unqueſtionable what is falſe or doubtful. Others will perceive it ſoon; you will be forced to ſee it yourſelves at laſt: and then what Shame and Vexation will you have brought upon your own Heads! – whereas, propoſing your Notions with an ingenuous Diffidence will ſecure an eaſy Retreat, if they chance to be confuted; and urging your Reaſons, when they are ſtrongeſt, with Modeſty of Speech, will make you beloved, as well as admired. You ſhould therefore conſtantly bear in your Thoughts, and imitate, the engaging Behaviour of Elihu in Job; who, having firſt waited till his Elders had ſpoken, "anſwered and ſaid: I am young, and ye are old: wherefore I was afraid, and durſt not ſhew you my Opinion. I ſaid, Days ſhould ſpeak, and Multitude of Years ſhould teach Wiſdom. But there is a Spirit in Man: and the Inſpiration of the Almighty giveth them Underſtanding; therefore hearken to me: I alſo will ſhew you my Opinion. (‡) To

(*) Poſitive Men often meet with their Match.

He that is poſitive in affirming a thing, may meet with another as poſitive in denying it; and then the two Sir Poſitives muſt have a Skirmiſh. *Et Vehemens cum Vehementi optimè converſatur.*

(‡) Job xxxii. 6, &c.

To the foregoing Particulars on this Virtue, I ſhall add the following, as Means to forward and promote them, and which themſelves alſo are included in the Quality before us. As,

1ſt. Youth ſhould guard carefully againſt Precipitancy and Raſhneſs in Conduct. Words may paſs over, and prove of ſmall Importance; but Actions are always of Moment: and yet the Young too commonly act without Scruple or Diſtruſt. Sometimes this ariſes from the Pride of thinking, that they cannot act amiſs: but ſometimes alſo from mere Thoughtleſſneſs, or a lively Impatience of Deliberation, joined with that peculiar enterpriſing Diſpoſition, and Unwillingneſs to believe any Harm will follow, which Youth inſpires, and riper Years find bitter Reaſon to lament. For indeed, what one thing is there dreadful in Life, which this adventurous Giddineſs doth not frequently bring on Men, in the very Beginning of their Days, and it may be fix down upon them to the End? You, of all others, ought to be cautious: for you have much to loſe, even in this World; and to plunge at the firſt Step into Miſery is a deplorable thing. You muſt be ſenſible, that Multitudes have done ſo, and Multitudes are doing ſo every Day, through mere Negligence, perhaps but a little Negligence: and if you are guilty of as much or more, how can you hope to eſcape better?

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It will coſt you far leſs Time and Trouble to avoid Errors, than to retrieve them. (*) Some cannot be retrieved at all; others but imperfectly. With your beſt Care you will find it hard enough to keep intirely clear of them; and what then muſt become of thoſe, who profeſſedly take no Care at all, but give up their Lives to Fancy and Chance? — Again,

Another Point, in which it is very uncommon, and yet very needful for young People to be ſober-minded, is, in moderating their natural Haſtineſs of Temper, and Readineſs to take Offence. It is in vain to think of reckoning up all the Occaſions, on which this Fault appears in them; but ſome ought to be mentioned particularly.

One is, that they are too commonly provoked at receiving Advice, and reſent it as an Affront. Now if it be given, as it certainly is for the moſt Part, ſolely or chiefly from Good-will to you; what an uncivil thing it is, to wound the Hearts of your beſt Friends doubly; firſt by your Indiſcretions, then by your Ingratitude; to tell them, that is no Concern of theirs, which they cannot help being moſt tenderly concerned about; and inſiſt on the Right you have, to ruin yourſelves, if you pleaſe! But perhaps they take upon them,

(*) *Multò potiùs eſt cavere, quàm admittere.*
Serm. CCCLXXXVII.

them, not only to adviſe you, but be angry with you: and that you cannot bear. Now it is very poſſible, their Anger, or however the Degree, or Time, or Manner of expreſſing it, may be improper: or, on the other Hand, it may be more neceſſary, than you imagine, or care to own. But at leaſt, it is a Proof that they mean you well; elſe, why ſhould they give themſelves any Diſquiet about you? And even if they do miſtake in ſome things, or go too far in their Fears for you, ſtill the Reaſon of their Solicitude is ſo kind, that the Exceſs of it may well be excuſed: Or ſuppoſe it not to proceed from Affection, but from what you will, Conceit, Cenſoriouſneſs, Hatred, if you pleaſe; it will be well worth your attending to it ſo far however, as to make your Advantage of it, by amending or vindicating or guarding yourſelf. And if they, who give you good Advice, be your Enemies, it will be much better to grieve them by taking it, than to pleaſe them by perſiſting in Sins or Follies.

There is a further Inſtance of Warmth of Temper in young People, which frequently hath very bad Conſequences, tho it proceeds from an excellent Principle. They ſet-out with the livelieſt Senſe of Right and Wrong in many Caſes: happy, were it ſo in all! They have uſually a ſtrong Abhorrence of doing unworthy things for the Sake of Intereſt: and it is a great Pity, they

they have not an equal Abhorrence of doing as unworthy things for the Sake of Pleaſure and Applauſe. But this Averſion to Baſeneſs and Unfairneſs, (though it can never be too deeply rooted, and to begin the World with Indifference in theſe Reſpects is a very bad Sign, yet,) if they are naturally of eager Spirits, hurries them on into moſt grievous Errors. In public Affairs they grow heady and high-minded; inattentive to the Weight of thoſe Reaſons, and the Merit of thoſe Perſons, that are againſt them; impatient to take the worſt of Methods, that promiſe but the Attainment of their imagined good Ends; in ſhort, exceſſively unreaſonable and injurious; and all with an Intention of acting the honeſteſt and nobleſt Part that can be. In private Life the ſame immoderate Warmth prompts them to conceive ſudden and furious Antipathies on the ſlighteſt Foundations: to magnify ſmall Faults or none into unpardonable Crimes; and purſue the ſuppoſed Offender with moſt unrighteous Reſentment, miſtaking it all the while for juſt Indignation.

Now Men of ſuch vehement Diſpoſitions, which exert their Vehemence chiefly in the Seaſon of Youth, if they have any Reflection, cannot help knowing their Danger: and therefore ſhould conſcientiouſly and perpetually be on their Watch againſt it: ſhould think ſeriouſly in their cooler Hours, how much the Miſre-

preſentations of others, how much more the Violence of their own Natures, may diſguiſe things to them; and, it may be, have actually done it many Times already: think what Imperfections there are, in the Minds and Behaviour of thoſe who are well-diſpoſed, in their own amongſt the reſt: think, even ſuppoſing the things, or the Perſons, they are angry with, very bad, whether the Bitterneſs of their Anger may not be as bad; think how much better and ſafer it is, to lean towards the milder Side; and how exceedingly blameable they will have been, ſhould all this Heat, or a conſiderable Part of it, prove at laſt to be groundleſs and unjuſt. But, next to the Danger of unreaſonable Averſions, ought to be mentioned, further,

That of unreaſonable Fondneſſes; againſt which the Young, if they will preſerve a due Sobriety of Mind, muſt always be ſtrictly on their Guard. They have had little Opportunity for, and therefore can have little Skill in, a Part of Knowledge, that requires a great Deal, judging of Characters. And yet they will enter all at once into ſuch Boſom-Friendſhips with almoſt mere Strangers, as a prudent Perſon would ſcarce contract with thoſe, whom he had known longeſt. Sometimes theſe ſudden Intimacies end in as ſudden Quarrels. And when they laſt longer, the Caſe is often yet worſe. The Favourites, choſen ſo haſtily, are the

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moſt part ill choſen; and when a Confidence without Reſerve (for Youth hath very little Reſerve) is placed in thoſe, who either deſign, or only judge amiſs; in how many Reſpects may they miſguide, to what Contempt may they expoſe, to what fatal Errors may they lead their inconſiderate Admirers! Therefore beware of plauſible Inſinuations and agreeable Appearances; allow none to put themſelves upon you for what they pleaſe: but examine them well, and always conſult your old and ſure Friends in the Choice of new ones. Indeed if you never chuſe any, perhaps it may be no Harm. Familiar Acquaintance you may have with many. A proper Degree of Truſt you may repoſe in ſome. But your Life may paſs, without meeting with one, to whom you can with Safety open your Heart entirely. And moſt of the pretended ſtrict Friendſhips are mere intereſted Combinations in the Elder, and a Mixture of fond Fancy and Affectation in the Younger. Therefore keep on the Watch; and particularly againſt thoſe, whom perhaps you are leaſt apt to ſuſpect, who expreſs the moſt Complaiſance to you, and are the fulleſt of your Praiſes, eſpecially to your Face. If this Behaviour be owing to Weakneſs, they are unworthy of your Eſteem; if to Deſign, they are dangerous. For the Scripture hath ſaid, "a Man that flattereth his Neighbour, ſpreadeth a Net for his

Feet." Inſtead therefore of running into the Arms of ſuch, keep them at a Diſtance. And with whomſoever you enter into a cloſer Connexion, continue ſtill to obſerve, with Candor indeed, but with Vigilance too, how they conduct themſelves, what Impreſſions they are making upon you: not think it any Breach either of Fidelity or Good-nature, to part with the deareſt Friend upon Earth, rather than endanger your Piety, your Virtue, your Happineſs, or even your Character. (*) — Further yet,

Carefully avoid the Weakneſs and Injuſtice of extolling your Intimates too highly, either in your Diſcourſe or even your Imagination, and diſparaging others in Compariſon: but ſtill more carefully avoid promoting their Intereſts in Oppoſition to Reaſon and Equity, to private Right or public Good. — Again,

Another Part of Sobriety of Mind, highly and peculiarly requiſite for the Young, is a diſcreet Management of their Expences. Covetouſneſs indeed, hateful and deſpicable as it is in the Elder, (‡) would be ſomewhat worſe in them: but all is not Covetouſneſs, that they are apt to call ſo: and Extravagance is a Mark only of Folly, not of Generoſity or Good-nature.

(*) See the Diſcourſes on Friendſhip, Vol. x. Page 151, &c.

(‡) *Nimium ad Rem in Senectute attenti ſumus.*

ture. They who ſquander needleſsly at ſome Times, will be driven to ſpare improperly at others, when they ſhould have been bountiful; and ſo will make a truly mean Figure, becauſe they would needs make a falſely great One. Then, if their Profuſeneſs riſe to any Height, it creates them great Uneaſineſs with their Parents and Friends; whom it always fills with Fears about them, and frequently ſtraitens and diſtreſſes; it occaſions (as they muſt run in Debt) Difficulties and Loſſes, oftentimes Ruin, to thoſe, with whom they have Dealings; and uſually to ſuch of them as deſerve it leaſt; they muſt bring themſelves into continual Perplexities; they will of Courſe be tempted, either to drown the Senſe of them by Intemperance, or to aim at getting out of them by diſhoneſt Arts and Methods, of one Kind or another; yet probably in vain. And if they come to have Families, they will in all Likelihood utterly undo thoſe, who ought to have been the Object of their tendereſt Love and Care. Remember therefore to ſet out cautiouſly; conſider well, that to riſe in your Way of living is very eaſy; but to lower it, one of the hardeſt things in the World; and lay it down for a Rule, that no Income whatever can ſupport Negligence and Expenſiveneſs. — Again,

Another Proof, which young Perſons ſhould give of a ſober and reaſonable Mind, is to fix upon, and

keep closely to, some fit Manner of spending their Time. For none of it is given us to be thrown away; and unless they apply early to what they ought, a Habit of Idleness will soon take firm Possession of them. To those of lower Rank, Necessity reads the daily Lesson of Industry: it will make their Condition comfortable and reputable; and if they think of being maintained at their Ease, they are infallibly ruined, Body and Soul. But whatever Rank we are of; without some Employment, Life must be tedious; and unless proper Employment be chosen to fill up the empty Spaces of it, gross Imprudences & Sins will be crowding into them. Or if the Idle could avoid these, yet surely it is bad enough, that they cannot avoid making a despicable Figure in the World; that their Inattention, which will gradually produce an Incapacity of conducting their own Affairs, must subject them to an absolute Dependance upon others, who may impose upon them without Fear, to their great Prejudice, in more Ways than one. And besides, how painful will the Reflection be to you, (if ever you have any Reflection,) what happy Circumstances you might have been in, what an honourable Appearance you might have made, had it not been for this contemptible Quality. But a still more alarming Thought is, that those Abilities and Opportunities of improving yourselves, and being

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useful to your Fellow-creatures, which God hath bestowed on you, He will hereafter call you to answer for: and He hath warned you beforehand, that "the unprofitable Servant, who hath hid his Talent in the Earth, shall be cast into outer Darkness."

All People therefore, and the Young especially, should keep themselves, not only employed, but employed to good Purpose. Both their Friends and they should be very careful, not to direct their Aim to a wrong Point: for there are unhappy Mistakes of this Kind. Such things are frequently made the Study and Business of Life, as those who employ themselves in them had much better know nothing of; at least can be little the better for knowing ever so well. But they take up a groundless Fancy of their own, or follow a weak Judgment or silly Example of another; set their whole Hearts on gaining a Reputation in some errant Trifle; and so, with great Pains, become very accomplished, and good for nothing. Not that slighter Accomplishments, if they be real and suitable to our Station, are to be overlooked; or Beginners in Life to be severely blamed, if they do place a little higher Value on such Matters than they deserve; but much Care should be taken by those about them, and still more by themselves, (for who is so nearly interested?) that Occupations of mere Amusement do not fill up

too much of their Thoughts or Time. (*) Perhaps they are very innocent, perhaps they are very elegant: therefore even the well-diſpoſed, among others, indulge their Inclinations for them without Scruple. But ſtill there is an eſſential Difference between things of Entertainment only, and things of Uſe; and young People ſhould be formed, as ſoon as poſſible, to attend to this Difference; and ſhould always remember, that the Subjects for their Minds to dwell upon, the Employments for their Days to be ſpent in, are partly the particular Ones that belong to the ſeveral Situations, in which they are now, or probably will be placed; partly the general Ones, of improving their Underſtandings in proper Knowledge, but above all their Hearts in the Love of God and their Duty: and ſo throw away Life upon other Purſuits to the Prejudice of theſe, is not only an Imprudence, productive of great Inconveniences in this World; but a Sin, juſtly liable to Puniſhment in another. — But,

Laſtly, the laſt Inſtance I ſhall mention of Sobriety of Mind, which ought to be ſacredly regarded by the Young, is preſerving and expreſſing a due Eſteem and Reverence of ſuch as are further advanced in Years. (†) It

(*) See Note (*) Vol. xiv. Page 283; and alſo Page 320.

(†) This awful Reſpect and Reverence to Years, was ſtrictly obſerved by the Heathens, of old. *credebant*

It is true, the natural Temper of the two Extremes of Life

Cruciabant hoc grande Nefas, et Morte piandum,
Si Juvenis Vetulo non insurrexerat ———
Adolescentis est Majores Natu revereri.

Apud antiquissimos Romanos, nec Generi, nec Pecuniæ, præstantior Honos tribui, quàm Ætati solitus: Majoresque Natu a Minoribus celebrantur ad Deorum propè et Parentum Vicem.

Ut inhumanum est Artus adfanti Naufragio irridere; ità sultissimum aliis exprobare Senectutem, ad quam ipse pervenire exoptas.

Nulli exprobanda est Senectus ad quam omnes optant pervenire: absurdum enim est, alii Probro dare, quod quis optat sibi contingere. Igitur, cùm per Ætatem virgit Ingenium tuum, et Animi Vis, noli deridere Senectutem, quæ minus Animo valet; desipiscit enim omnis Senex, et ad puerilem redit Stultitiam; Ætatis igitur Vitium ferendum, non ridendum.

It is insolent as well as unnatural to insult over an unavoidable Infirmity, and to trample on the venerable Decays of human Nature. He that acts in this Manner, does but expose his own future Condition, and laugh at himself beforehand. — "Dishonour not a Man in his Old-age, for even so [illegible] we wax old."

It is violating all the Laws of Nature, to treat Persons superior to us by their Quality and Station, Employs or Age, in a familiar Way. Familiarity is not allowable but among Equals: and tho' People may sometimes waive their Privileges, yet we ought not to forget our Duty, and treat them otherwise than their Character demands. Liberties of this Kind bespeak a sordid Education, and perfect Want of Decorum.

Active Old-age, (the Winter of an useful virtuous Life,) is as much to be desired, as the contrary is to be deprecated. Crowned with Victory over the inferior Passions, girt round with useful and experimental Knowledge, leaning on the Staff of Prudence, Courage, and Resolution, the Old-Man becomes a Blessing to Society; we rise up to him with Reverence, and rejoice to do him Honour.

Serm. CCCLXXXVII.

Life is very different; but Providence hath kindly mixed them together in Society, for mutual Benefit. Undoubtedly the Aged are ſubject to Imperfections and Faults; yet probably you often accuſe them unjuſtly; or if not, have not you Imperfections and Faults too, upon the whole more juſtly diſagreeable to them, than theirs are to you? Still theſe ought not to hinder you from being loved; nor ſhould thoſe hinder them from being reſpected. They ſhould interpret candidly the Sallies of your Inconſiderateneſs; and you, in Return, ſhould paſs over the little Failures in Point of Temper, which Infirmities may render very excuſable in them; and bear with the Reſtraints of poſſibly too great Caution, Parſimony, and Regularity; though in general their long Experience muſt have made them better Judges of theſe Points than you are as yet. But indeed it will for the moſt part be in your own Power, to take off theſe Reſtraints from yourſelves in a great Meaſure, if not entirely. Check but that Levity, which raiſes in them Suſpicions of you; behave ſo, that you may ſafely be truſted; and endeavour to be agreeable to them, as they do continually to be uſeful to you; and all will be well. Your Sprightlineſs and gay Humour was unqueſtionably deſigned in ſome Degree to comfort and enliven their declining Age. Be not unwilling therefore to ſpend ſome Share of it that

that Way; beſtow a little of your Cheerfulneſs upon them, in the Seaſon when you have Plenty of it, and you will give them a great Deal of Pleaſure, when they want it very much. It is a truly good-natured Part to do ſo; it is a proper Gratitude for the many Kindneſſes and Advantages, which all young People have received from their Friends of riper Years; and they may make you large Amends for it, often in your worldly Intereſts, but almoſt conſtantly in ſuch Information and Direction, as will do you more Service, than all your Agreeableneſs can afford them Delight; probably it is not long that they may continue with you; ſtudy to profit as much as you can by them, before you are left to yourſelves; and give them ſuch a Proſpect of your doing well, that they may quit the World with Comfort. In every common Art and Buſineſs you ſhew great Regard to experienced Inſtructors; and can they fail to be of proportionable Uſe in the Science of conducting Life, the moſt important and moſt difficult of all others? Beſides the Reſpect which you are now perhaps unwilling to pay, you will in Time be very uneaſy, if you do not receive. Therefore preſerve a Rule of Behaviour, that you will one Day find your own Account in; and ſuffer it not, by your Fault, to be loſt out of the World in the Mean while. — Upon the Whole, If

If in the Profecution of this uſeful Quality, I have urged Motives of a temporal, as well as ſpiritual Nature, ſo hath the Scripture in a Multitude of Places. And if, together with greater Duties, I have recommended ſome of leſſer Moment; and, amongſt other Faults, cautioned againſt ſeveral, which may commonly be thought not to amount to Sins; yet whoever hath a juſt Concern for thoſe, who are ſetting out upon the Journey of Life, will think they need very uſeful Admonition for the Way. And it is highly requiſite that all Perſons, eſpecially all YOUNG Perſons, ſhould cheriſh, even in ſmaller Inſtances, that Soberneſs and Rightneſs of Mind, which elſe will ſoon be neglected in more important Matters; following conſcientiouſly that Injunction of the Apoſtle, "Whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are honourable, whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good Report; if there be any Virtue, if there be any Praiſe, theſe things you are to think of, and do them; – For,

As on the one Hand, if at an Age when the Heart is warm, the Emotions ſtrong, and when Nature is expected to ſhew itſelf free and open, you can already ſmile and deceive, what are Men to look-for when you ſhall be longer hackneyed in the Ways of the World; when Intereſt ſhall have compleated the Obduration of your

your Hearts, and Experience ſhall have improved you in all the Arts of Guile? (*)

So, on the other Hand, to give an early Preference to Honour above Gain and Pleaſure, when they ſtand in Competition; to deſpiſe every Advantage that cannot be had without the Sacrifice of Virtue; (‡) to brook no Meanneſs; to ſtoop to no Vice nor Diſhoneſty; Theſe are Indications of a great Mind, and ſure Preſages of future Eminence and Diſtinction in Life. (†)

(*) Fraud in Youth will become Perfidy in Manhood.

(‡) See Knox's Eſſays, No. 88, On forming Connections.

(†) *Flores in Horto magnam pariunt Voluptatem. Dùm Aurora fulget, moniti Adoleſcentes Flores colligite. Si Præſens bene collocaveris, de Futuro tibi non Dubium erit.*

Sermon

SERMON CCCLXXXVIII.

On the same Subject.
Propriety of exhorting to it.

Tit. ii. 6. "Young Men exhort to be sober-minded."

Having largely and particularly explained the amiable Quality here enjoined on Youth; I am now,

Secondly, To shew the Necessity and Propriety of this Exhortation. — The Reasons, why Sobriety of Mind should in particular be recommended to Youth, among others, are these which follow:

1st. It will be acknowledged, that it is impossible for a Person with any constant Tenor to act well, that does not think wisely, or to think wisely, that does not think soberly. But what is of constant Necessity, in every Stage of Life, must be of special Importance, in that upon which the rest depend; and by Consequence, he that sets out with this Advantage, is in the most probable Method to go on and prosper. We may say of this Disposition what Solomon does of the Law, or the Commandment, to which it is so admirably subservient: "When thou goest it shall lead thee, when thou sleepest

ſleepeſt it ſhall keep thee, when thou awakeſt it ſhall talk with thee." It is the ſureſt Guide and Direction, the ſtrongeſt Guard and Defence, the moſt agreeable Company and Converſation. And as the Apoſtle here charges us, that we ſhould exhort young Men eſpecially "to be ſober-minded;" ſo that great and wiſe King ſeems to have addreſſed, or as it were dedicated, to them his divine Book of Proverbs; the Aim and Intention of which, as we read in the very Preface, is "to give to the young Man Knowledge and Diſcretion," that "when Wiſdom ſhould enter into his Heart, and Knowledge be pleaſant to his Soul, Diſcretion might preſerve him, and Underſtanding keep him."

2dly, The Morning of our Life, our early and flouriſhing Years, ought eſpecially to be armed with this Precaution, becauſe it is then we are expoſed to the greateſt Dangers; when the Paſſions are the ſtrongeſt, and ſo the moſt apt to tranſport us with their Violence; when the Pleaſures and Entertainments of Senſe have their full Taſte and Reliſh, and are therefore the more capable of betraying us into Exceſs; when we are the moſt eaſy, credulous, and complying, and ſo the moſt open to the Attempts of others, the likelieſt to be inſulted and overborn by the Confident, or enſnared by the Deſigning, or perverted by thoſe that go aſtray; wherefore, Experience coming too late, ſhould,

if poſſible, be ſupplied by more early Conſideration, and Reaſon ſhould invite us before Affliction conſtrains us to be ſerious. Upon this Motive proceeds the conſtant Addreſs of the Royal Inſtructor juſt cited, and who cannot be cited too often in the preſent Argument: "Hear, my Son, the Inſtruction of a Father, and forſake not the Law of thy Mother: Hear, O my Son, and receive my Sayings, and the Years of thy Life ſhall be many: I have taught thee the Way of Wiſdom, I have led thee in right Paths. My Son, if Sinners entice thee, conſent thou not. Walk not thou in the Way with them; refrain thy Foot from their Paths. Leſt thou give thine Honour unto others, and thy Years unto the Cruel: leſt Strangers be filled with thy Subſtance, and thy Labour be in the Houſe of Strangers, and thou mourn at the laſt – and ſay, How have I hated Inſtruction, and my Heart deſpiſed Reproof!"

3dly, As moſt Ornaments, whether of Mind or Body, ſit beſt upon the Young, flouriſh in the Spring of Life, and look with peculiar Gracefulneſs in the Bloom and Beauty of Nature; ſo this excellent Temper of which we ſpeak, which is the chief Attire of the Soul, and to which moſt other good Qualities that it can put on are but Appendages, is then, in the exacteſt Manner, fit and becoming; and if it be real and not coun-

counterfeit, natural and not affected, eaſy and not preciſe, it has indeed the moſt Luſtre, and renders thoſe who wear it the moſt amiable and charming. For we do not here diſtinguiſh between the inward Principle, and the outward Act, between Sobriety of Judgment, and of Deportment; though in Strictneſs, the latter is not termed Sobriety, but Decorum, or true Greatneſs. (*)

Wherefore the Prophet aſſures us, "It is good for a Man to bear the Yoke in his Youth:" meaning the Yoke of Affliction and Trouble, which cannot be good, but when it is neceſſary, and after all, will be grievous: how much better is it to take upon him That of Prudence and Sobriety, which in a great Meaſure may prevent the Neceſſity of the former, and which is itſelf ſo eaſy and ornamental? How much better to embrace the Diſcipline of "Wiſdom, to put his Feet into her Fetters, and his Neck into her Chains, whoſe Fetters are a ſtrong Defence for him, and her Chains a Robe of Glory?"

Holy. As Youth has many natural Gifts and Endowments that ſpeak in its Behalf, and entitle it to Favour, ſo

(*) This is admirably defined by the great Maſter of Definitions, Ariſtotle, in his ſecond Book of Rhetoric. Greatneſs, ſays he, is a ſoft or eaſy, and well compoſed Gravity; very proper to add itſelf to the Robes of State and Dignity, or of thoſe who wear *Gilt Chariots*, and are in Royal *Courts*. Serm. CCCLXXXVIII.

ſo it has one natural Diſadvantage, in Reſpect of Time, which it would be glad, if poſſible, to balance or compenſate. In this Regard, it has been excellently well obſerved, of Birth or Quality, that it gives a Perſon at eighteen or twenty, the ſame Eſteem and Deference which another of inferior Rank acquires at fifty; ſo that the former has thirty Years gained upon him. Now the Privilege which Cuſtom and Civility allow to the Noble, Reaſon and Juſtice demand, and generally obtain, for the Sober and Diſcreet; and they are the happieſt who poſſeſs it by a double Title. The Wiſe Man repreſenting the Cauſes of his Addreſs and Courtſhip to Wiſdom, tells us this was one of his principal Inducements: "For her Sake, (ſays he,) ſhall I have Eſtimation with the Multitude, and Honour with the Elders, though I be young." And in the Story of Suſanna, there is a remarkable Expreſſion concerning Daniel, when young; that the Elders and Judges of the People ſaid to him, "Come and ſit down among us, ſeeing God hath given thee the Honour of an Elder."

Thirdly, Of the Importance and Advantage of beginning early to give ſerious Attention to Conduct.

As ſoon as Reaſon and Reflection begin to dawn, they can ſcarce help obſerving a moral Difference in Actions, and that, whilſt Virtue hath a natural Tendency to our Promotion, Vice even depreſſes the human

man Nature. (*) They see, that those who are born with the same Advantages of Fortune are not all equally prosperous in the Course of Life. While some of them, by wise and steady Conduct, attain Distinction in the World, and pass their Days with Comfort and Honour; others of the same Rank, by mean and vicious Behaviour, forfeit the Advantages of their Birth, involve themselves in Difficulties and Misery, and end in being a Disgrace to their Friends, and a Burden to, if not Nuisance of, Society.

It is not on the external Condition in which we find ourselves placed, but on the Part which we are to act, that our Welfare or Unhappiness, our Honour or Infamy, depend. When therefore we are beginning (‡) to act That Part, what can be of greater Moment

(*) Fortune may begin a Man's Greatness; but it is Virtue that must continue it.

(‡) *Dimidium Facti, qui bene cepit, habet.*

All the Actions and Enterprizes of Mankind lie under the Restriction of this Moral Sentence, whether they be prudent or imprudent in the Undertaking, and good or bad in the Accomplishment. It intimates that Persons should be very deliberate and advised in the Beginning of an Undertaking; for that to begin well, is the only Way to quicken and dispatch the End, let it be what it will.

"There is a Tide in the Affairs of Men,
Which, taken at the full, leads on to Fortune;
Omitted, all the Voige of their Life

ment than to regulate it with the moſt ſerious Attention, before we have yet committed any fatal or irretrievable Errors? If inſtead of exerting Reflection for this valuable Purpoſe, we deliver ourſelves up, at ſo critical a Time, to Sloth and Pleaſure, and conſult nothing but Humour, Fancy, and Amuſement, what good can we expect to follow from ſuch Beginnings? While ſo many around us are under-going the ſad Conſequences of a like Indiſcretion, for what Reaſon ſhall not theſe Conſequences extend to us? Can we attain Succeſs without that Preparation, and eſcape Dangers without that Precaution, which is required of others? Shall Happineſs grow up to us, of its own Accord, and ſolicit

Is bound in Shallows, and in Miſeries."

Non Fumum ex Fulgore, ſed ex Fumo dare Lucem,
Cogitat, ut ſpecioſa dehinc Miracula promat.

One with a Flaſh begins, and ends in Smoke;
The Other out of Smoke brings glorious Light,
And (without raiſing Expectation high)
Surprizes us with dazzling Miracles.

The firſt Step a Man takes in the World generally determines all the reſt; and is the Foundation of his Reputation, as well as the beſt Preſage of his future Fortune. From the firſt Meaſures he takes, Men of Experience will tell, whether he will ſucceed, or no.

It is, therefore, highly important to take this Step with the utmoſt Caution, and to ſignalize our Entry on Life by ſomething that is great and glorious. The Spring of Life is that critical Inſtant that muſt either confirm, or blaſt the Hopes of all ſucceeding Seaſons. The firſt Impreſſions the World takes of us, ſeldom or never wear out.

licit our Acceptance, when, to the reſt of Mankind, it is the Fruit of long Cultivation, and the Acquiſition of Labour and Care? Deceive not yourſelves with ſuch arrogant Hopes. Whatever be our Rank, Providence will not for our Sake, reverſe its eſtabliſhed Order. The Author of our Beings hath enjoined us to "take heed to our Ways;" – "to ponder the Paths of our Feet;" – "to remember our Creator in the Days of our Youth." – He hath decreed, that they only "who ſeek after Wiſdom ſhall find it;" – "that Fools ſhall be afflicted becauſe of their Tranſgreſſions;" – and, "that whoſo refuſeth Inſtruction, ſhall deſtroy his own Soul." (*)

By liſtening to theſe Admonitions, and tempering the Vivacity of Youth with a proper Mixture of ſerious Thought, we may aſſure to ourſelves Cheerfulneſs for the reſt of our Life: but by delivering ourſelves up at preſent, to Giddineſs and Levity, we lay the Foundation of laſting Heavineſs of Heart.

When we look forward, therefore, to thoſe Plans of Life which either our Circumſtances have ſuggeſted, or our Friends have propoſed, (†) we ſhall not heſitate

(*) See Knox's Eſſays, No 89, An Addreſs to a young Scholar, ſuppoſed to be in the Courſe of liberal Education at School.

(†) See the Note, Vol. xviii. Page 312. on conſulting the natural Diſpoſitions and Qualifications of Children, in Order to their proper Settlement in Life.

tate to acknowledge, that in Order to purſue them with Advantage, ſome previous Diſcipline is requiſite; (*) but

(*) *Nemo quâvis Arte vel Diſciplinâ clareſcit, niſi qui primis Annis in eâ ſe exercet; nec indomitus Taurus ad Aratrum, aut Equus ad Curſum, exactâ jam Ætate, ſunt habiles. Res alienæ Pecuniâ emuntur, ut Domus, Veſtes, et alia; Diſciplinæ autem liberales emuntur Tempore; requirunt enim diuturnum Studium, et indefeſſam Diligentiam.*

Opes iſtas vulgares, ſilicet Aurum, Gemmas, Argentum, Palatia, Regnum, Dii nonnunquàm largiuntur Ignavis et Indignis; Doctrinam verò, Virtutes, et quæ veræ ſunt Opes ac propriæ noſtræ, voluerunt parari Laboribus. Education begins the Gentleman; but Reading, and Company, and Reflection muſt finiſh him. The Ground muſt be prepared before it can be planted.

Per varios Caſus, per tot Diſcrimina Rerum
Tendimus ad Latium. —— ——
Qui ſtudet optatam Curſu contingere Metam,
Multa tulit, faciſque, Puer, ſudavit, et alſit.

Youth have no Right or Claim to be idle. They are but juſt liſted into the World, and muſt be active, diligent, and indefatigable. If ever they propoſe to command with Dignity, they muſt ſerve up to it with Diligence. Improvement of Parts is by Improvement of Time. "Counſel in the Heart of Man is like deep Water; but a Man of Underſtanding will draw it out." *Ut Avari Deſiderium nunquàm ſatiatur; ità, quos tenent Amor Literarum, indefatigabili Labore Artes proſequuntur.* It is leſs Pain to learn in Youth, than to be ignorant in Age. *Aſpera quidem primùm ad Eruditionem Via eſt, ſed poſteà ſit plana. Doctrinæ Radices amaræ, Fructus verò dulces. Priuſquàm aſſuêverîs multa nos offendunt, quæ poſteà, Uſu, fiant jucunda; ità diſcendi cupidis prima Literarum tædet, ſubitò fiant facilia et jucunda.*

Vita Hominis ſine Literis Mors eſt, et vivi Hominis Sepultura. Homines nullâ Diſciplinâ et Arte culti, ſolâ Formâ a Beſtiis differre videntur. Homo ſine Diſciplinâ ferox eſt, et agreſtis. See Vol. xviii. p. 296.

Not

but let us at the same Time be assured, that, whatever

Not that it is hereby meant that we must be all Scholars, or be always thinking: No; the Mind must sometimes be diverted, that it may return to thinking the better. *Aurea Mediocritas. Ut hæc fessis Gladios, quos semper distringitur: ita segnescit Studium quod nunquam quies remittitur. Arcus, semper tensus, rumpitur. Otiare quo labores.*

Little Reading and much Thinking; little speaking and much hearing, is the best Way to improve in Knowledge. Neither our own Observations, nor our reading the Labours of the Learned, nor the Attendance on the best Lectures, nor enjoying the highest Conversation, can ever make a Man truly wise, without the Labours of his own Reason in surveying, examining, and judging concerning all Subjects upon the best Evidence he can acquire. A Man, by learning a great Part of the Bible by Heart, may be a *living* Concordance; and by much reading and remembering Divinity, he may be a *speaking* Index to Theological Folios, and yet for all this he may understand very little of Divinity. Tho' you have read Philosophy and Theology in Abundance, and every other Art and Science, yet if your Memory is the *only* Faculty employed, with the Neglect of your reasoning Powers, we do not see what Title your Head has to true Learning, above the Shelves where your Books are placed on; at most you can justly claim no higher Character but that of a good Historian of the Sciences. A good Genius, a happy Memory, much reading and Observation, will do much of themselves towards the Cultivation of the Mind, and where to these Advantages Meditation is added, this Man has all human Aids concurring to raise him to a superior Degree of Wisdom and Knowledge.

Some of the great Advantages of Meditation are the following. 1st, It *transfers* and *conveys* the Sentiments of others to ourselves, so as to make them *properly* our own: 2dly, It enables us to distinguish Truth from Error, and to reject what is wrong, after we have seen, read, or heard any thing: 3dly, By this we fix in our Memory *only* what we *like*, approve of, without *loading* it with *all* that we read:

is to be our Profession, no Education is more neceſſary to our Succeſs, than is the Acquirement of virtuous Diſpoſitions and good Habits. (*)

This is the univerſal Preparation for every Character, and every Station in Life. Bad as the World is, Reſpect

Laſtly, By *properly* meditating on what comes within the View of our Minds, we may *improve* upon the Sentiments and Inventions of others, and thereby acquire great Reputation, and perhaps Emolument, from their Labours. See the Note, Vol. xiv. Page 287, on haſty and intemperate Readers. *In legendo, non poſſim carpenda ſunt, nec avidè tumultuando Univerſa; per Partes pervenitur ad totum; aptari Omni Viribus decet, nec plus occupari, quàm cui ſufficere poſſumus. Non quantum vis, ſed quantum capere poteſ, hauriendum eſt; quo plus recipit Animus, eo plus ſe magis laxat.* — And,

As we are not always to be at Study, ſo neither are we to be all Scholars. It is a fooliſh Conceit that Men without Languages, are therefore without Underſtanding. It is apparent in all Ages, that ſome ſuch have been even Prodigies for Ability; for it is not to be believed that Wiſdom ſpeaks to her Diſciples only in *Latin*, *Greek* and *Hebrew*. See the Note, Vol. xviii, Page 337.

Perception is the Inlet of Knowledge. All Natural Philoſophy, which is not built upon Experiment, is but a mere conjectural Amuſement. See the firſt Letter, in No. 564, of the Spectator.

There is no Neceſſity of being led through the ſeveral Fields of Knowledge; it will be ſufficient to gather ſome of the faireſt Fruit from them all, and ſo lay up a Store of good Senſe, ſound Reaſon, and ſolid Virtue. One Philoſopher is worth a thouſand Grammarians. Good Senſe and Reaſon ought to be the Umpire of all Rules, both ancient and modern.

(*) *Licèt omnes Scientiæ nobiles ſint, tamen Divina eſt nobilior, quid ejus Subjectum eſt nobilius. Imprimis venerare Deum.*

Reſpect is always paid to Virtue. In the uſual Courſe of human Affairs, it will be found, that a plain Underſtanding, joined with acknowledged Worth, contributes more to Proſperity, than the brighteſt Parts without Probity or Honour.

Whether Science therefore, Buſineſs, or public Life, be our Aim, Virtue ſtill enters for a principal Share into all thoſe great Departments of Society. (*) It is connected with Eminence in every liberal Art; with Reputation in every Branch of fair and uſeful Buſineſs; with Diſtinction, in every publick Station. The Strength which it gives the Mind, and the Weight which it adds to the Character; the generous Senti-

ments;

(*) What contributes to make the ſpring Time of our Life uncapable of many real Advantages, is, that young Men, generally ſpeaking, hate the very Idea of Virtue; (ſee the 2d. Part of No. 284, of the Spectator;) that Name gives them as much Horror, as its Contrary pleaſes them: and, as they look upon its Rewards to be only in Reverſion, they conclude that it is Time ill-ſpent to ſet up for Wiſdom, and to conſult Reaſon, when they ſhould indulge their Senſes. It was, therefore, good Counſel given to the Roman Youth,

Diſce bonas Artes, mane, Romane, Juventus;
Ad ſenium ſumus Hoſtis: at annis amabilis eſto.

Youth is but a Scene of Preparation, a Drama, upon the right Conduct of which all future Happineſs will depend. The Youth who follows his Appetites, too often ſeizes the Cup before it has received its *beſt* Ingredients; and by anticipating his Pleaſures, robs the remaining Parts of Life of their Share: ſo that his Eagerneſs only produces a Manhood of Imbecility, and an Age of Pain.

ments which it inſpires, the Ardour of Diligence which it quickens, the Freedom which it procures from pernicious and diſhonourable Avocations, are the Foundations of all that is high in Fame, or great in Succeſs among Men.

Whatever ornamental or engaging Endowments we now poſſeſs, Virtue is a neceſſary Requiſite in Order to their ſhining with proper Luſtre. Feeble are the Attractions of the faireſt Form, if it be ſuſpected that nothing within correſponds to the pleaſing Appearance without. By whatever Arts Attention may at firſt be attracted, yet we can hold the Eſteem, and ſecure the Hearts of others, only by amiable Diſpoſitions and the good Accompliſhments of the Mind. (*)

The Fire of a glowing Imagination (the Property of Youth) may make Folly look pleaſing, and lend a Beauty to Objects, which have none inherent in them: juſt as the Sun-Beams may paint a Cloud, and diverſify it with beautiful Stains of Light, however dark, unſubſtantial, and empty in itſelf. But nothing can ſhine with undiminiſhed Luſtre, but Religion and Knowledge, which are eſſentially & intrinſically bright.

Take it therefore for granted, which you will find by Experience, that nothing can be entertaining, but what

(*) See Knox's Eſſays, No. 35. Hints to thoſe who are deſigned for the Life which is called, A Gentleman without a Profeſſion.

what is, in some Measure, beneficial; because nothing else will bear a calm and steady Review.

Nobility, Riches, States and Supremacy may procure us a customary Respect, and make us the Idols of an unthinking Croud: — But Virtue, Knowledge and Learning alone recommend us to the Love of those in a superior Class, who admire more the Merits of our Understanding and good Qualities, than the Advantages of our Birth and Fortune. — Again,

You may be fancied awhile upon the Account of Good-nature, the inseparable Attendant upon a Flush of sanguine Health, and a Fulness of youthful Spirits; but you will find, in Process of Time, that among the Wise and Good, useless Good-nature is the Object of Pity, Ill-nature of Hatred: but Nature beautified and improved by an Assemblage of moral and intellectual Endowments, is the only Object of a solid and lasting Esteem. These are the Qualities, whose Influence will last when the Lustre of all that once sparkled, is passed away. (*) — Besides, The

(*) Many large Encomiums the Scripture has given to several learned Men. Moses was famous for being versed in all the Languages of the Egyptians: and Solomon for his general Knowledge, and particularly in Plants, from the Cedar to the Hyssop. Daniel was chief of the Magicians: Abraham was a great Astronomer; David and Job were eminent Philosophers, &c.

Learning, if rightly applied, makes a young Man thinking, attentive

The Advantage hereof is great; — It is neceſſary to habituate our Minds, in our younger Years, to ſome Employment, which may engage our Thought, and fill the Capacity of the Soul at a riper Age. For, however we may roam in Youth, from Folly to Folly, too volatile for Reſt, too ſoft and effeminate for Induſtry, ever ambitious to make a ſplendid Figure, and to "ſhine before Men," but never endeavouring to "glorify our Father which is in Heaven;" yet the Time will come, when we ſhall out-grow the Reliſh of childiſh Amuſements. And, if we are not provided with a Taſte for manly Satisfactions to ſucceed in their Room, we muſt of Courſe become miſerable at an Age more difficult to be pleaſed.

There is not a greater Inlet to Miſery and Vices of all Kinds, than the not knowing how to paſs our vacant Hours. When the firſt Part of their Lives, who are not brought up to any manual Employment, is ſlipt-away without any acquired Reliſh for Reading, or Taſte for any other rational Satisfactions, what will they do? ſhall they then apply themſelves to their Studies? Alas! the Seed-time of Life is already paſt; the enterpriſing and ſpirited Ardour of Youth being over, with-

tentive & induſtrious, confident and wary; and an old Man cheerful and reſerved. 'It is an Ornament in Proſperity, a Refuge in Adverſity, an Entertainment at all Times; it cheers in Solitude, and moderates upon a Throne.

without having been applied to those valuable Purpoles for which it was given, all Ambition of excelling upon generous and laudable Schemes quite ſtagnates. (*) If they have not ſome poor Expedient to deceive the Time, or, (to ſpeak more properly,) to deceive themſelves; the Length of a Day will ſeem tedious to them, who perhaps have the Unreaſonableneſs to complain of the Shortneſs of Life in general. When the former Part of our Life has been nothing but Vanity, the latter End of it can be nothing but Vexation of Spirit. In ſhort, we muſt be miſerable, without ſome Employment to fix, or ſome Amuſement to diſſipate, our Thoughts: the latter we cannot command in all Places, nor reliſh at all Times; and therefore there is an abſolute Neceſſity for the former. We may purſue this or that new Pleaſure; we may be fond for a while of a new Acquiſition; but when the Graces of Novelty are worn off, and the Briſkneſs of our firſt Deſire is over, the Tranſition is very quick and ſudden, from an eager Fondneſs to a cool Indifference. Hence there is a reſtleſs Agitation in our Minds, ſtill craving ſomething

(*) There are few Inſtances to be found in Hiſtory of a Prince that began and atchieved any great and famous Enterprize after fifty Years of Age: whether the Decline of Nature leaves not Reſolution ſufficient for ſuch Deſigns and Actions; or Fortune, like her Sex, have no Kindneſs left for old Men, how much ſoever ſhe favoured them when young. Serm. CCCLXXXVIII.

thing new, ſtill unſatisfied with it, when poſſeſſed; till Melancholy increaſes, as we advance in Years, like Shadows lengthening towards the Cloſe of Day.

Hence it is, that Men of this Diſpoſition are conſtantly complaining, that the Times are altered for the worſe, becauſe the Sprightlineſs of their Youth repreſented every thing in the moſt engaging Light; and when Men are in good Humour with themſelves, they are apt to be ſo with all around them. The Face of Nature brightens up, and the Sun ſhines with a more agreeable Luſtre; but when Old-age has cut them off from the Enjoyment of falſe Pleaſures, and habitual Vice has given them a Diſtaſte for the only true and laſting Delights: when a Retroſpect of their paſt Lives preſents nothing to their View but one wide Tract of uncultivated Ground; a Soul then diſtempered with Spleen, Remorſe, and an Inſenſibility for each rational Satisfaction, darkens and diſcolours every Object; and the Change is not in the Times, but in them, who have been forſaken by thoſe Gratifications which they themſelves would not forſake. — On the contrary,

When the Time of Youth is improved, and laid out in the Purſuit of Wiſdom, which others waſte in Idleneſs and Folly, what an inexhauſtible Fund of Knowledge and Comfort is laid up for the ſucceeding Periods of Life; he is conſcious of having acted up to the Dig-

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tity of his Nature; and from that Conſciouſneſs there reſults a ſerene Complacency, which, tho' not ſo violent, is much preferable to the Pleaſures of the animal Life. Such a Mind has got Materials for greater Improvements; it can travel on from Strength to Strength; for in Literature, as in War or worldly Acquiſitions, each new Conqueſt he gains, or Addition he makes to his Circumſtances, enables him to puſh his Conqueſts ſtill further, to enlarge his Eſtate, and the Empire of his Reaſon. Thus he is ever in a progreſſive State, ſtill making new Acquirements, ſtill animated with Hopes of future Diſcoveries.

Let not, then, the Seaſon of Youth be barren of Improvements, ſo eſſential to our future Felicity and Honour. Now is the Seed-time of Life, and "according to what we ſow, that ſhall we alſo reap:—He that ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall reap alſo ſparingly; and he that ſoweth bountifully, ſhall reap alſo bountifully" of the Fruit of his Doings. "He that ſoweth to the Wind, ſhall reap the Whirl-wind;" or "to the Fleſh, Corruption: but he that ſoweth to the Spirit, &c. (under) Life. For the Wages of Sin is Death: but the Gift of God" to the Righteous, "is eternal Life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord."

The Duty, then, here exhorted to, is, as ſoon as we arrive at the Uſe of Reaſon, and the Exerciſe of our

thing new, ſtill unſatisfied with it, when poſſeſſed; till Melancholy increaſes, as we advance in Years, like Shadows lengthening towards the Cloſe of Day.

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The Duty, then, here exhorted to, is, as ſoon as we arrive at the Uſe of Reaſon, and the Exerciſe of our

Understanding; to take God into Consideration, and to begin a religious Course betimes; to consecrate the Beginning of our Days, and the Flower and Strength of them to his Service, whilst our Minds are yet soft and tender; and, in all our Designs and Actions, to be sober, serious, and considerate; to do all things in the Fear of God, and with a View to his Honour and Glory.

Sermon

SERMON CCCLXXXIX.

On the same Subject.

Advantages of, and Motives to, it.

Tit. ii. 6. "Young Men exhort to be sober-minded."

Having, in the preceding Discourse, shewn the great Importance of beginning early to give serious Attention to our Conduct, I am now,

Lastly, To point out some of the several Reasons which ought more particularly to influence us hereto.

They are these—1st. That it confirms and settles the Principles of Religion.

2dly, That it renders the Practice of Religion more easy and agreeable.

3dly, That it preserves from Temptations. And,

4thly, That it affords the greater Opportunities of eminent Piety and Virtue. And,

1st. Sobriety of Mind confirms and settles the Principles of Religion.

Tho the Happiness of Birth, and the Advantages of Education, are great and obvious; yet, that either of these should be lasting and effectual, depends upon your-

yourſelves. What Admonitions and Advices you have heard, what Cautions you have received from Parents or Friends, from Books or Converſation, are a ready Stock committed to your Management and Improvement; a Treaſure in which you cannot make too much Haſte to be rich; an Inheritance which indeed renders them the happieſt, to whom it comes the ſooneſt, and which (contrary to the uſual Enjoyment of all earthly Inheritance) may be poſſeſſed without the Deaths of either Friends or Relatives, yea, the more largely perhaps for their Joint-exiſtence, and mutual Concourſe.

Some of you, indeed, may be deprived of, others removed from, your natural Parents and Relations, and therefore the more concerned to begin a ſtricter Alliance and Affinity with thoſe good Principles and wiſe Purpoſes, which can alone ſupply their Place. It imports you, in a particular Manner, to "ponder well the Paths of your Feet, that all your Ways may be eſtabliſhed." But,

2dly, As Sobriety of Mind has ſuch a Power, in keeping the Principles of Religion firm and ſtable, ſo it has no leſs Influence in rendering the Practice of Religion eaſy.

All things are eaſy to a willing Mind; but a ſober Mind is as willing as it is wiſe. For that which occaſions moſt of the Difficulties of a good Life, is our too late

late Conſideration, when having gone ſo far without Thought, we cannot retire without Pain. But he who has the Benefit of timely Reflection, and what is the Conſequence of it, an early Virtue, is like him that has attained an Art or Profeſſion, in that State of Docility; which having learnt by Rule he practiſes by Cuſtom, and having then had the Induſtry to make it his Buſineſs, has afterwards the Reward to find it his Pleaſure.

3dly, It is a ſtrong Defence againſt Temptation. That which expoſes us to ſpiritual Danger, is, for the moſt Part, a Levity of Spirit, a Raſhneſs of Purpoſe, a Confuſion and Diſſipation of Thought. And we are ſo ſenſible this is our Failing, that we are willing to make it our Excuſe; as believing we cannot mitigate and extenuate a Fault more than by alledging, that it was not Malice, but Incogitancy; not Preſumption, but Infirmity. Now,

Altho the Acknowledgement of our Folly, for which theſe are but ſofter Terms, be indeed to be commended as the Token of an humble Spirit; yet it is infinitely better, by a timely Wiſdom and true Greatneſs of Soul, to have prevented (ſo far as we may) the Occaſion of ſo unfortunate an Humility. Indeed,

As Want of Care has the ſame Effect as Want of Virtue; ſo Want of diligent and ſober Reflection will have the ſame Effect as Want of Underſtanding; it be-

ing with the Treaſures of the Mind, as with other Riches, he that does not uſe them, wants them.

For this Reaſon it is that Solomon hath joined together the ſlothful & inſenſible, in that elegant Report: "I went by the Field of the ſlothful, and the Vineyard of the Man void of Underſtanding; and lo, it was all grown over with Thorns, and Nettles had covered the Face thereof, and the Stone-wall thereof was broken down."

Where by the FIELD and VINEYARD, how natural is it to conceive the Mind of a Young Perſon, choſen out as a fair and lovely Soil, fenced about with good Inſtructions, and planted with Graces and Virtues, as with the choiceſt Vines; yet thro' the Remiſſneſs of the Poſſeſſor, "grown over with Thorns, and covered with Nettles," over-run with degenerate Habits, and fruitful only in ſuch Propenſions as are wild and unprofitable, ſharp and afflicting? And,

As to the latter Part of the Reſemblance, "the Stone-wall thereof was broken down;" how does this repreſent the open and unguarded Condition of ſuch as ſhall have loſt that prudent Reſerve, and ſerious Caution, with which their Minds were fenced & fortified againſt Aſſaults? Which is more particularly expreſſed in another Sentence of that admirable Book; "He that hath no Rule over his own Spirit, is like a City that

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is broken down, and without Walls." On the contrary, a ſtrong City and a well-ordered Garriſon are the proper Emblems of a ſedate and ſober Mind, which is not only compaſſed with Walls and Bulwarks, with wiſe Maxims and virtuous Principles, but where the frequent Walkings of the Guard, (i.e) the conſtant Returns of Thought, at once ſecure it againſt a Surpriſe from without, and put an immediate Stop to any Diſorder or Irregularity within.

"I have written unto you, Young Men, (ſays St. John) becauſe ye are ſtrong;" or what imports the ſame thing, becauſe you are hale; (i.e) in ſuch a State of Body and Soul, and Affections, as is moſt ſubſervient to Piety—moſt quick and governable, and moſt ſucceſsfully applied to all the Offices of Duty. Govern therefore your Appetites before the evil Days come; now you may "gird them, and carry them whither you will;" but if you neglect the Seaſon, they will hereafter "gird you, and carry you whither you would not."

But if (as ſeems moſt probable) the Apoſtle there ſpeaks of the Strength of Grace againſt Temptations, we know this is eſpecially promiſed to thoſe who ſhall beſt employ the Powers of Nature. So that we may underſtand the Paſſage with Reſpect to both: "I have written unto you, Young Men, becauſe ye are ſtrong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have

overcome the wicked One." And after such Victory, who will not concur in the Applauſe of the wiſe King, and ſay, that "The Glory of Young Men is their Strength." But,

4thly, Sobriety of Mind affords the greater Opportunities of eminent Piety and Virtue.

For he that is thus armed, is, we ſee, the fitteſt and moſt expedite not for Defence only, but for Action; ſo that when Occaſions preſent themſelves, he is ready to meet them with Delight, and improve them to Advantage. — If called to his Devotions, he never brings a Sacrifice without a Heart; he can the ſooner recollect and compoſe himſelf, and put his Thoughts into a Frame becoming the holy Duty, "without Wrath or Doubting," without Levity or Vanity, and ſo far as is poſſible, without Wandering or Inattention.

If he be a Perſon of Quality, and reſolved not to do like inferior People, then, Whatever they do well, he does better than they: he does not imitate their Piety, but excels it: he does not follow them, but conſiders his Dignity, and is the firſt to lead them: it is thus he keeps his Rank and Diſtinction both in Church and State; and none that attend at either are more devout or modeſt than himſelf.

He gives the ſame Attention to the reading of God's Word, as Samuel, even when a Child, did to the immediate

mediate Revelation of it; and answer with like Obedience at the Call: "Speak, Lord, for thy Servant heareth." In the mean while his Thoughts enlarge upon that Request, and silently put up a Prayer, like that ascribed to Solomon, when young: — "I thy Servant and Son of thy Handmaid am a feeble Person, and of short Time, and too young for the understanding of Judgment and Laws: give me Wisdom that sitteth by thy Throne, and reject me not from among thy Children. O send her out of thy holy Heavens, and from the Throne of thy Glory, that being present she may labour with me, that I may know what is pleasing unto thee. For she knoweth and understandeth all things, and she shall lead me soberly in my Doings, and preserve in her Power." And,

As the Youth of a sober Mind is in the best Frame and Temper for profiting by God's Word, so likewise for answering the Design, and enjoying the Benefit of his Sacraments.

He considers his Baptism, not as an empty Ceremony, a formal Admission into the Church, but as an Act of a most sacred Intention, and most serious Importance; by which, (like Samuel and St. John Baptist,) he was given and dedicated to God, "from his Mother's Womb." He esteems himself engaged, in Duty and Justice, in Honour and Gratitude, to perform,

form, by the Divine Assistance, the Vows that were made in his Name: to "sanctify God in his Body, and in his Spirit, which are God's;" to study his Will, whose he is, and whom he serves; to chuse that better Part of "sitting at the Lord's Feet, and hearing his Words," and that nobler Character of "searching the Scriptures daily," which he hath "known from a Child."

The same Temper, as it gives him the quickest Sense of his Frailty, and of the Sins and Offences of his Youth, so it puts him upon that ingenious Question of holy David, "Wherewithal shall a Young Man cleanse his Way?" In Answer to which, he remembers that another holy Ordinance is provided, to cancel our unhappy Transgressions of the former; that another "Fountain" (or rather, another STREAM) is "opened in the House of David," and that he who duly and worthily comes to it, shall be clean; so that earnestly desiring, when Place and Opportunity permit, to be a Guest at the Holy Table, and to "take the Cup of Salvation," having "washed his Hands in Innocence, he devoutly approaches the Altar" of God, trusting that it will "be with him according to his Word."

If from these Institutions and Services of Piety, we proceed to all the Acts and Instances of Virtue, whether divine or human, social or private; there is not one that can be assigned in the whole Train and Concert,

cert, for which the Sober-minded is not especially prepared. — In the Performance of generous Offices, the composing of Differences, the doing of Kindnesses, and the like, where there is not so great an Opposition of Nature, he yet enjoys so far an Advantage above others, as he has not only the Desire, but the Consideration to acquit himself in these Regards. For in these we many Times fail, not for Want of Inclination, but of Leisure, not of habitual Principles, but of actual Application and Address, while other Engagements and Amusements make us lose, by not thinking at present, Occasions that are irretrievable by After-thought.

And as for such Duties as seem more harsh and self-denying, such as Patience under Trouble, Forgiveness of Injuries, with others of that Order; he is so much the more ready to discharge them, as he hath advanced further in obtaining the "Rule over his own Spirit," so as less to feel the Struggle and Reluctancy of natural Constitution. In a Word, He of all Persons must be qualified for whatever is good or great; inasmuch as Sobriety of Mind is, in Effect, that Mastery over ourselves, that Employment of our best Faculties about their proper Objects, in which consists the Duties of this Life, and the Happiness of the next.

Happy then, and in the fairest Prospect of being forever happy, is he that shall have made the early Choice

of the Wise Man: who, "when he was young, or ever he went abroad, desired Wisdom in his Prayer, his Feet went the right Way; from his Youth up he sought after her, and had his Heart joined with her from the Beginning." Happy indeed, who with better Success shall have imitated those Characters in the Gospel, of the Person that had "kept the Commandments from his Youth, whom Jesus beholding, loved him:" and of the other, of whom we read, "when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said: Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God."

I might here enlarge on the Dignity it gives your Person, the Grace and Comliness with which it adorns your Behaviour, the Force and Weight it adds to your Converse, the Assistance it affords you in your Business and Profession, the Sweetness it supplies to your innocent Diversions, the sure Ground and Basis it lays for your Reputation and Esteem, the Service it contributes to your Health and Safety, or the Advantage of the sound Mind to the sound Body. Besides,

As "the Glory of Young Men is their Strength," in another Meaning than what we have already intimated, I might urge the Benefit of this noble Temper, in Respect of Courage, or Bravery, which belongs to the Genius of our Nation, and in which it now triumphs. I might observe, that this only can inspire a

Man

Man with deliberate Valour, in martial Enterprizes, and Feats of Arms: inasmuch as Courage, if precipitate or enthusiastic, is not Courage, but Cowardice enraged. I might assert, that he only is the true Hero, who is so in a just Cause, and upon good and serious Principles; because nothing else can give him an Intrepidity of Soul, and Clearness of Thought, in the Point of Danger, or in the Article of Death. And even this Part of the Heroic Character never shines so bright as when the highest Degree of Temperance is in Conjunction with the highest Degree of Fortitude and Gallantry. And further,

I might set before you some of the chief Examples of an early Piety and Prudence recorded in sacred History: I might attempt to draw those illustrious and lovely Characters of Joseph, Moses, and Daniel, when young; that being tried, you may be "found faithful, and worthy to sit in your Fathers' Seat." And,

As "the Glory of Children are their Fathers," and as obedient Children, and wise Sons, make a grateful and honourable Return, in adding to their Fathers' Glory; I might hence raise the Ambition of those, whose Fathers and Ancestors, (with other Lights and Ornaments of their Families, direct or collateral,) by their Piety and Learning, their Wisdom and Justice, their Courage and Resolution, have merited Places of high

Diſtinction in Sacred or Civil Honour. So that you ſhould ſeem to need no other Admonition, than that moſt agreeable one of Praiſe and Commendation of "famous Men, ſuch as did bear Rule in the Kingdom, renowned for their Power, giving Counſel by their Underſtanding; Leaders of the People by their Counſels, and by their Knowledge of Learning meet for the People, wiſe and eloquent in their Inſtructions."

"All theſe were honoured in their Generations, and were the Glory of their Times. With their Seed ſhall continually remain a good Inheritance, and their Children are within the Covenant."

To theſe Advantages of an early Piety, I ſhall add the following as Motives and Obligations to it. As,

1ſt. It is neceſſary in Point of Duty and Intereſt; with Regard to God and ourſelves; to the preſent and the future. Religion is our Duty in every Scene and Stage of Life; conſequently in Youth among the reſt. God has a Right to our Service from the firſt Moment of our having any conſiderable Uſe of our Reaſon, to the laſt Moment of our Lives. Yet young Perſons are apt to flatter themſelves, that becauſe they are young, they have for that Reaſon a Kind of Diſpenſation to be fooliſh and vicious, and that it is Time enough to be wiſe and good when they are old: But we would aſk them, whether they would not take it ill to be told

that

that they are not as yet come to Years of Diſcretion? and whether Virtue be not the genuine, the neceſſary Iſſue and Reſult of true Diſcretion? Beſides,

Youth, conſidered as ſuch, is the moſt proper Seaſon, and has many Obligations hereto.

Youth is a proper Age for Diſcipline, very obſequious and tractable, fit to receive any Kind of Impreſſion, being ſupple and obedient: Habits have not as yet eſtabliſhed their Dominion: Prejudices have not yet pre-occupied the Underſtanding: the World has not had Time to contract and debaſe the Affections: and all the Powers are more active, diſembarraſſed, and free, than they will be at any future Period. (*)

Our Character, therefore, is now, (under Divine Aſſiſtance) of our own forming; our Fate is, in ſome Meaſure, put into our own Hands; and, whatever Impulſe we now give to our Deſires and Paſſions, the Direction is likely to continue, and will form the Channel in which our Life is to run: and may determine our ever-

(*) Thoſe who never allow themſelves an Hour for ſerious Reflection when they are young, will find it a difficult Taſk indeed, to fix their Minds upon any profitable Study when their Faculties are impaired by Age, and their Strength begins to fail. Long Diſuſe will deaden all their further Powers, and put out their Light in Obſcurity.

everlasting Iſſue (*). — If "the Beginning of Strife," and ſo of any other Irregularity, be, as the wiſe King Aſſuerus, "like the letting out of Water," the Beginnings of Sobriety and good Conduct muſt be like the ſetting Banks and Piles againſt a Flood, the turning it into a ſafer Current, and ſaying, "hither ſhalt thou come and no further, and here ſhall thy Waves be ſtayed." It is difficult to make Impreſſions upon Age, and to deface the Evil which hath been deeply imprinted upon young and tender Minds. When good Inſtruction hath been neglected at firſt, a conceited Ignorance commonly takes Poſſeſſion, and obſtructs all the Paſſages through which Knowledge and Wiſdom ſhould enter. (†) Upon

(*) No One wants to be informed what a mighty Influence the Conduct of Youth has, and neceſſarily muſt have, upon the whole Courſe and Progreſs of our Lives; and in this, as well as all other Buildings, how much the Superſtructure depends upon the Foundation. The good or ill Habits we contract give ſuch a Turn and Caſt to the very Conſtitution both of our Bodies and Minds, that, tho' wellcome or no long, they generally accompany us to the Grave.

(†) There ſeems to be a peculiar Propriety in addreſſing moral Precepts to the riſing Generation. Beſides that, like Travellers entering on a Journey, they want Direction, there are Circumſtances which render it probable, that Inſtruction will be more efficacious in Youth, than at a maturer Period. See Page 469.

Long Habits of Buſineſs or Pleaſure, and an indiſcriminate Intercourſe with Mankind, often ſuperinduce a great Degree of Inſenſibility;

Upon this Account, we ſhould begin the Work of Religion betimes, when we may do it with the greater Advantage: and anticipate Vice, by giving God and Religion the firſt Poſſeſſion of our Souls. Indeed,

This is the Time of Action. The Soul will not lie fallow. Good or evil will come forth.

Let us conſider, then, the Employment of this moſt valuable and important Period, as the higheſt Truſt which will ever be committed to us, and as, in a great Meaſure, deciſive of our Happineſs in Time and in Eternity. For,

As in the Succeſſion of the Seaſons, each, by the invariable Laws of Nature, effects the Production of what is next in Courſe; ſo, in human Life, every Period of our Age, according as it is well or ill ſpent, influences

ſibility; and the battered Veteran at laſt conſiders the Admonitions of the Moraliſt as the vain Babbling of a Sophiſt, and the Declamation of Profeſſion. The keen Edge of moral Perception is blunted by long and reiterated Collision; and to him who has loſt the finer Senſibilities, it is no leſs fruitleſs to addreſs a moral Diſcourſe, than to repreſent to the Deaf, the Charms of Melody; or to the Blind, the Beauties of Nature.

But Youth poſſeſſes Senſibility in Perfection, and unleſs Education has been totally neglected, or erroneouſly purſued, its Habits are uſually virtuous. Furniſhed with a natural Senſibility, and free from any acquired Impediment, the Mind is then in the moſt favourable State for the Admiſſion of Inſtruction, and for learning how to live.

fluences the Happiness of that which is to follow. Virtuous Youth gradually brings forward accomplished and flourishing Manhood; and such Manhood passes of itself, without Uneasiness, into respectable and tranquil Old-age. But,

When Nature is turned out of its regular Course, Disorder takes place in the moral, just as in the vegetable World. There is no forcing Nature against her Bias, nor inverting the Order of Providence. If the Spring puts forth no Blossoms, the Summer will be without Beauty, and the Autumn without Fruit: So, if Youth be trifled away without Improvement, Manhood will be contemptible, and Old-age miserable. (*) Again,

(*) Could we, in our younger Years, take a View of ourselves in the last Stage of Life, and see what Kind of Figure we shall make in Old-age, it would be a very powerful Incitement to Virtue.

For, however becoming Youth may think it to give themselves up to a Life of Folly and Dissipation; yet, doubtless, it will be agreed, that Religion and Virtue alone can give Gracefulness to Old Age. When we see a hoary Head, we expect to hear Wisdom flow from the Tongue; that Wisdom which is the Result of Experience. Piety seems to be the natural Language of the Aged, who must soon bid Adieu to this World, and whose Thoughts and Affections ought all to be sent before them to their heavenly Country. To such a Man as this we listen with Reverence and Delight—rendered venerable by the Goodness of his Heart, and the Sanctity of his Manners, he will be the Darling of the Good, and command Respect even from the very Libertine.

Again, As we grow in Years, our worldly Pleasures, Diverſions, and Amuſements, of all Kinds, gradually flatten upon us; nay moſt, if not all, of them at laſt quite leave and forſake us. By Conſequence, if we do not, at the proper Seaſon, in the Days of our Strength and Health, lay in a Stock of other Delights and Entertainments, thoſe which flow from Reaſon and Religion, from Piety and Devotion, from a good Faith and a good Conſcience, which are increaſed by Age, rather than diminiſhed; we ſhall be in Hazard of being in a moſt comfortleſs Condition here, as well as in a moſt miſerable one hereafter.

But further, This is the moſt acceptable Time of all others, becauſe it is the FIRST of our Age.

Under the Law, the Firſt-fruits and Firſt-born were God's — In like Manner we ſhould devote the Firſt of our Age and Time unto him.

God is the firſt and moſt excellent of Beings; therefore it is fit, that the Prime of our Age, and the Excellency of our Strength, ſhould be dedicated to him.

Beſides, — By this early offering of ourſelves to God, we make it evident that we are not drawn to our Duty

If we think it deſirable thus to finiſh our Courſe, we muſt apply early to the acquiring of good Habits; for, may we not aſk with the wiſe Son of Sirach, "If thou haſt gathered nothing in thy Youth, how canſt thou find any thing in thine Age?" No Trees bear Fruit in Autumn that bloſſom not in the Spring. Ser. 389.

Duty by those forcible Constraints, nor driven by that pressing Necessity which lies upon Men in Time of Sickness and Old-age, but are wholly a FREE-WILL Offering to God, and therefore, must be more acceptable and well-pleasing to him, (*) — But,

What should chiefly induce us hereto, is, that this Age of our Life may, for any thing we know to the contrary, be the only Time we may have for this Purpose; (†) and, if we cast-off the Thoughts of God, and

(*) As there is Joy in Heaven at the Conversion of a great and old Sinner, so it cannot but be a very delightful Spectacle to God, and Angels, and to the Spirits of just Men made perfect, to see a young Person, in the Pride and Flower of his Age, that is courted by Pleasures and Honours, by the Devil, and all the Vanities of the World, to reject all these, and to cleave steadfastly to his Duty, employing his whole Time either innocently or usefully, in serving God, and doing Good unto Men.

Laudo factum de Necessitate Virtutem, sed plus laudo illam quam eligit Libertas, non inducit Necessitas.

It is agreed that Youth is the best Time of contracting Friendships, while our Spirits are tender, and our Minds apt to receive every Impression: Youth therefore should by no Means let-slip this favourable Season of cultivating a Friendship with the best of Beings, who called them from the Dust, when they were nothing, and has ever since been their kind Preserver, and continual Benefactor; if they are unmindful of him while they enjoy such large Effects of his Bounty, how can they hope that He will accept the Dregs of a Life worn out in the service of Sin?

(†) *Ex tot Millibus Millium qui nascuntur, quota Pars illorum est, qui ad Senium usque perveniant? Ex his ipsis pauciſſimi sunt, quibus justum Senectutis Spatium explere datum est.*

and defer the Buſineſs of Religion to Old-age, intending, as we may pretend, to ſet about it at that Time, we may fail before it, and then, where ſhall all our intended Eminencies be? Nay, "how greatly fallen, ſtricken of God, ſmitten and afflicted," when we "ſhall be caſt into Hell, with all the People that forget God."

He therefore that would not venture his everlaſting Happineſs upon the greateſt Hazard and Uncertainty, muſt make Religion, and the Care of his Soul, his firſt Concern, and "remember his Creator in the Days of his Youth."

"Young Men exhort to be ſober-minded."

No Man knows what invaluable Treaſure he prodigally waſtes, when he lets-ſlip this golden Seaſon and Opportunity of his Life, never more, perhaps, to be recalled.

The Years which now paſs over our Heads leave permanent Memorials behind them. (*) From our thoughtleſs Minds they may eſcape, but they remain in the

(*) The Fool does not diſcern, and conſequently cannot mind the Good that is obvious, for his Thoughts are ſtill intent upon the Future; but the prudent Man retrieves things that were loſt, out of Oblivion; by ſtrength of Recollection he renders them perſpicuous, and enjoys them as if they were preſent. Happineſs having only a few nice Minutes to be courted in, the Man that has no Intellects neglects his Opportunity, and ſo it ſlides away from his Senſe, and no more belongs to him. Serm. CCCLXXXIX.

the Remembrance of God. (*) They form an important Part in the Regiſter of our Life, and will hereafter bear Teſtimony, either for or againſt us, at that Day when for all our Actions, but particularly for the Employments of our Youth, we muſt give an Account to God. — But further,

The Ways of Religion and Virtue are now by far more eaſy to be acquired than hereafter, when we ſhall be eſtranged thereto, by contrary confirmed Habits of Sin.

Remember thy Creator therefore Now, "in the Days of thy Youth: To-day, whilſt it is called To-day, leſt any of you be hardened through the Deceitfulneſs of Sin;" for, "the Night cometh wherein no Man can work."

If we rob God of the beſt of our Days, how can we expect that He will accept "the dry Bones," the Dregs and wretched Remains of our Lives! "Offer it THEN to thy Governor, will he be pleaſed with thee, or will he accept thy Perſon?"

"Behold, therefore, Now is the accepted Time; Now is the Day of Salvation: Seek ye the Lord while he

(*) *Quemadmodum Navigantibus Terraque Urbesque recedunt; ſic ruſticiſſimi Temporis Curſu primùm Pueritiam abſcondimus, deindè Adoleſcentiam, deindè Senectutis optimos Annos. Ætas nuſquàm non deſuit, ſivè dormias, ſivè vigiles. Senſim ſine Senſu Ætas ſeneſcit: Horæ cadunt, Dies, Menſes, Anni. Periunt et imputantur.*

he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near; and defer not till Death to be juſtified."

Wiſe Men are wont to fore-caſt, and provide for the Eaſe and Comfort of their After-days; but, of this Wiſdom we are ſurely void, if we "forget God Days "without Number," and riot in every Sin before us, to ſwell the Greatneſs of our future Account! (*) For, Much Guilt will create much Grief, being as ſo many Grains of Sorrow againſt an evil Day. — Conſider this, then, all ye that forget God in the Days of your Proſperity, and in the beſt Age of your Lives, and turn to the Lord, and he will receive you: and to God, and he will abundantly reward you; "Before the evil Days come, and the Years draw nigh, wherein thou ſhalt ſay, I have no Pleaſure in them; when the Sun, and the Moon, and the Stars be darkened," and all the Comforts and Joys of Life be fled and gone.

Youth, indeed, are in the Bloom of Life, every thing is gay and ſmiling around them; — a flattering and dangerous

(*) Believe me, little Comfort will be found in Religion by thoſe who only apply themſelves to it as a Refuge when the World begins to leave them: If you would experience the true Joy that Religion affords, make her your early Choice, devote to her the Prime of your Days, when you are in your full Strength; and then, when your Sun begins to decline, and the Pleaſures of Youth to fail you, ſhe will return all your Kindneſs ſeven-fold into your Boſom.

gerous Situation! too apt to render the Mind inſenſible to every Impreſſion but that of Pleaſure, while, giddy with Proſperity, it never beſtows a Thought on any thing beyond the preſent Moment. But, let them conſider, theſe are deceitful Advantages which will paſs away with their Youth; and they will be ſurprized, when ſtripped of their Gaiety, to find no ſolid Satisfaction left to ſupply its Place. It therefore highly concerns them to provide a comfortable Aſylum before the Winter of Life draws on, to make to themſelves an Intereſt in God and Eternity, which may be their Support when the World ſinks under them.

They, who make God their Friend at this early Period, whatever Trials or Afflictions they meet with, they may retire into their Cloſet, and there find a Comfort which the World can neither give, nor take away.

Let them think with what Confidence they may look up to their Heavenly Father in Time of Affliction, if, in their Days of Health and Proſperity, they have remembered, and thought upon him; and how it will ſweeten Old-age itſelf to have the Recollection of a well ſpent Life to look back upon, and a whole Life devoted to the Service of God. How many pleaſing Reflections muſt ariſe in the Mind, when it thus takes a View of its paſt Labours, of thoſe Hours which have been ſpent

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in Wiſdom, and not in Indolence, or a giddy Round of trifling Pleaſures, but in an active Courſe of Piety and Virtue.

Not that we would inculcate an auſtere Gravity, in Youth unbecoming their Years; no: ſo far from it, that Piety never appears more lovely and engaging than when it is accompanied with that innocent Vivacity ſo natural to Youth. — But then,

They ſhould have ſomething better to depend upon, than a mere Flow of animal Spirits, which will fail them on many Occaſions, and leave the Mind gloomy and diſcontented. Thoſe who are the moſt lively, are at Times the moſt ſubject to Lowneſs of Spirits; but, this would not be the Caſe if their Cheerfulneſs was built on a ſolid Foundation, on the Conſciouſneſs of doing their Duty, and poſſeſſing the Favour of Heaven. This we may depend upon as a certain Truth (for the Experience of Men in all Ages has confirmed it) that innumerable have been thoſe who have repented of their worldly Schemes of Happineſs, but no one ever yet repented of having devoted himſelf to the Service of God; no one ever yet thought (upon taking a View of his paſt Life) that Religion had employed too large a Part of it. This (i.e) Religion (in the due Practice of it) will make our "Light to ſhine in Obſcurity, and break forth as the Noon-Day," cauſing us to triumph

over every thing. In the End our Sun will ſet without a Cloud, and if ever we arrive at Old-age, it will make it an Old-age of Piety and Peace, free from the Torments of an accuſing Conſcience, and bleſſed with that Cheerfulneſs and Gladneſs of Heart, which can ſoften even Pains and Infirmities, and, in the laſt Stages of Life, is the peculiar Reward of Virtue and Innocence.

I have but one Caution to add, [viz] that amidſt all our Endeavours after Improvement, we conſtantly preſerve a due Dependance on the Bleſſing of Heaven, without which all our other Endeavours will be fruitleſs and in vain.

It is too common with the Young, even when they reſolve to tread the Path of Virtue and Honour, to ſet out with a preſumptuous Confidence in themſelves. Truſting to their own Abilities for carrying them ſucceſsfully thro Life, they are careleſs of applying to God, or of deriving any Aſſiſtance from what they are apt to reckon the gloomy Diſcipline of Religion.

But alas! How little do they know the Dangers which await them? Neither human Wiſdom, nor human Virtue, unſupported by Religion are equal for the trying Situations which often occur in Life. By the Shock of Temptation, how often have the moſt virtuous Intentions been overthrown? Under the Preſſure

of

of Misfortune, how frequently has the greateſt Conſtancy ſunk. "Every good and every perfect Gift is from above," – Wiſdom and Virtue, as well as "Riches and Honour, come from God." Deſtitute of his Favour, the Young are in no better Situation, with all their boaſted Abilities, than Orphans left to wander in a pathleſs Deſert, without either Guide to conduct them, or Shelter to cover them from the impending Storm. Youth, therefore, ſhould correct their ill-founded Arrogance; and expect not that their Happineſs can be independent of Him who made them. By Faith and Repentance they ſhould apply to the Redeemer of the World; and by Piety and Prayer, ſeek the Protection of the God of Heaven.

I ſhall Conclude all with the ſolemn Words in which a great Prince delivered his dying Charge to his Son; Words, which every young Perſon ought to conſider as addreſſed to himſelf, and to engrave deeply on his Heart. "Thou Solomon, my Son, know thou the God of thy Father, and ſerve him with a perfect Heart, and with a willing Mind." — For, "the Lord ſearcheth all Hearts, and underſtandeth all the Imaginations of the Thoughts. If thou ſeek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forſake him, he will caſt thee off for ever."

Sermon

SERMON CCCXC.

The Character of true Wisdom, and the Means of attaining it.

Prov. iv. 7. "Wisdom is the principal thing: therefore get Wisdom: and with all thy getting, get "Understanding."

After the Delineation we have already given of the Duties of Youth, we cannot, we think, better address them than in these Words of Solomon, so fully applicable to their further Instruction: — "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore, get Wisdom: and with all thy getting, get Understanding."

The sage Instructor of the World, from the Eminence on which Providence had placed him, surveys Mankind. Discontented with themselves, and their present Condition, he beholds them engaged in the Pursuit of something that still flies before them. Pleasure, Wealth, and Power, appear in their View, and solicit their Attention. Grieved to see Time misspent in Quest of things perishable, and Labour lost on that which either may not be obtained; or, when obtained, may dis-

disappoint in Enjoyment all the Hopes excited by Expectation, he raises his Voice, and wishes it to be heard to the Ends of the Earth. He calls Men off from a fruitless Chace after Objects attained with Difficulty, and possessed without Satisfaction; he points out One, adequate to all their Efforts; One, in the Pursuit of which no Time can be misspent, no Labour can be lost; One, which presents itself a fair Mark, to be always hit by the quick Eye and the steady Hand; One, that may be surely gained by Genius and Diligence, and when gained, is productive of Pleasure, Riches, and Honour; Pleasure which fadeth not away, Riches which none can take from the happy Possessor, and the Honour which cometh from God only. — Solomon found, if Men were disposed to be contented with any thing, it was That with which they never should be contented, their Ignorance. He exhorts them to learn: "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore, get Wisdom: and with all thy getting, get Understanding."

The Subject will best be laid before you, in its several Branches, by considering,

First, What it is we are enjoined to acquire;

Secondly, How we are to acquire it; and,

Thirdly, Why we are to acquire it. And,

First, We are to consider the Nature of That which we are so carnestly enjoined to acquire; [viz.] "Wis-

dom." "Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore, get Wisdom: and with all thy getting, get Understanding."

To enter here minutely into the Discussion of this Point, and shew what we are to understand by Wisdom, would lead us into the extensive Field of all Science, whether in Theory or Practice; we shall therefore, with the Wise Man, leave the Word at large, as comprehending all Knowledge whether in Wisdom, Prudence, or Practice; and proceed to shew the Necessity of it, and the best Means of acquiring it.

Some may allege, in Bar to what we have said, and as an Excuse for their Indolence; the Want of proper Talents to make any Progress in Learning. To which we answer,-that few Stations require uncommon Abilities to discharge them well; for the ordinary Offices of Life, that Share of Apprehension which falls to the Bulk of Mankind, provided we improve it, will serve well enough. Bright and sparkling Parts are like Diamonds, which may adorn the Proprietor, but are not necessary for the Good of the World; whereas common Sense is like current Coin; we have, every Day, in the ordinary Occurrences of Life, Occasion for it; and if we would but call it into Action, it would carry us much greater Lengths than we seem to be aware of. Men may extol, as much as they please, fine, exalted, and superior Sense; yet common Sense, if attended with Humility

mility and Industry, is the best Guide to beneficial Truth, and the best Preservative against any fatal Errors in Knowledge, and notorious Misconducts in Life. For none are, in the Nature of the thing, more liable to Error, than those who have a Distaste for plain sober Sense and dry Reasoning; which yet is the Case of those, whose warm and elevated Imagination, whose uncommon Fire and Vivacity makes them in Love with nothing but what is striking, marvellous, and dazzling. For great Wits, like great Beauties, look upon mere Esteem as a flat insipid thing; nothing less than Admiration will content them. To gain the Good-will of Mankind by being useful to them, is, in their Opinion, a low, grovelling Aim; their Ambition is to draw the Eyes of the World upon them by dazzling and surprising them; a Temper which draws them off from the Love of Truth, and consequently subjects them to gross Mistakes. For, having too much Life and Spirit, they cannot go to the Bottom of a Subject, nor trace up every Argument, through a long tedious Process, to its Original. Whereas Men of fewer Ideas, who lay them in Order, compare, and examine them, and go on, Step by Step, in a gradual Chain of thinking, make up by Industry and Caution, what they want in Quickness of Apprehension. Be not discouraged, if you do not meet with Success at

first. Observe (for it lies within the Compass of any Man's Observation,) that He who has been long habituated to one Kind of Knowledge, is utterly at a loss in another to which he is unaccustomed, till, by repeated Efforts, he finds a progressive Opening of his Faculties, and then he finds out a Connection of Ideas, which, to a practised Understanding, was obvious at first. But, by neglecting to use your Faculties, you will in Time lose the very Power of using them.

Others there are, who plead an Exemption from Study, because their Fortune makes them independent of the World. That is, because their Situation in Life exempts them from the Necessity of spending their Time in servile Offices, therefore they may dispose of it just as they please; it is to imagine, because God has empowered them to single out the BEST Means of employing their Hours, [viz] in Reading, Meditation, in the highest Instances of Piety and Charity; therefore they may throw them away in a Round of Impertinency, Vanity, and Folly. The Apostle's Rule, that "if any Man will not work, neither should he eat," extends to the Rich, as well as Poor; only supposing, that there are different Kinds of Work assigned to each. The Reason is the same in both Cases, [viz] that he who will do no good, ought not to receive or enjoy any. As we all are joint Traders and Partners in Life, he for-

*. See Vol. IV. page 38.

forfeits his Right to any Share in the common Stock of Happineſs, who does not endeavour to contribute his Quota or allotted Part to it; the public Happineſs being nothing, but the Sum-total of each Individual's Contribution to it. An eaſy Fortune does not ſet Men free from Labour and Induſtry in general; it only exempts them from ſome particular Kinds of Labour. It is not a Bleſſing, as it gives them Liberty to do nothing at all; but as it gives them Liberty wiſely to chooſe, and ſteadily to proſecute, the moſt ennobling Exerciſes, and the moſt improving Employments, the Purſuit of Truth, the Practice of Virtue, the Service of that God, "who giveth them all things richly to enjoy;" in ſhort, the doing and being every thing that is commendable, though nothing merely in Order to be commended. That Time, which others muſt employ in Labour (which often deceives their Expectation) they may lay-out in cultivating the Mind, a Soil always grateful to the Care of the Improver. The Sum of all, is; That, tho you are not confined to any PARTICULAR Calling, yet you have a GENERAL One; which is to watch over your own Heart, and to improve your Head; to make yourſelf Maſter of all thoſe Accompliſhments, [viz] an enlarged Compaſs of Thought, that flowing Humanity, and Generoſity, which are neceſſary to become a great Fortune; and all of thoſe Perfections, [viz] Moderation, Humility,

and Temperance, which are necessary to bear a small one patiently; but especially it is your Duty to acquire a Taste for those Pleasures, which, after they are tasted, go off agreeably, and leave behind them a grateful and delightful Flavour on the Mind.

Happy that Man, who, unembarrassed by vulgar Cares, Master of himself, his Time & Fortune, spends his Time in making himself wiser; and his Fortune in making others (and therefore himself) happier: who, as the Will and Understanding are the two ennobling Faculties of the Soul, thinks himself not complete, till his Understanding be beautified with the valuable Furniture of Knowledge, as well as his Will enriched with every Virtue; who has furnished himself with all the Advantages to relish Solitude, and enliven Conversation; when serious, not sullen; and when cheerful, not indiscreetly gay; his Ambition not to be admired for a false Glare of Greatness, but to be beloved for the gentle and sober Lustre of his Wisdom and Goodness. The greatest Minister of State has not more Business to do in a public Capacity, than he, and indeed every Man else, may find in the retired and still Scenes of Life. Even in his private Walks, every thing that is visible convinceth him, there is present a Being invisible. Aided by natural Philosophy, he reads plain legible Traces of the Divinity in every thing he meets; and

and when he ſees him, he adores him with the Tribute of a grateful Heart. — But,

Secondly, On the beſt Method of acquiring it.

Reſpecting the Method of School-Inſtruction at preſent in Uſe among us, it is one which has been long tried, and found ſucceſsful—witneſs thoſe great and ſhining Characters, formed under its Auſpices, which adorn our Annals; nor have its Adverſaries yet been able to propoſe another, liable, upon the whole, to fewer Objections. (*)

As to Authors, the Writers of Greece and Rome are our Maſters in Style and Compoſition; with Relation to which, the Spirit of every Piece will evaporate in the Tranſfuſion. Next in Value to Knowledge, is the Mode of communicating it with Eaſe and Propriety. They who have ſtudied the beſt Writers of Antiquity with this View, will always themſelves be the beſt Writers in another Language. When theſe ſhall ceaſe to be regarded as our Models, elegant Simplicity and manly Energy will give place to a falſe Glare of Affectation and Refinement; looſe and licentious Tenets will be tricked out in the meretricious Garb of falſe Eloquence. A vitiated Taſte in Writing like that which preceded the Decline and Downfal of the Roman Empire, will precede our own. Epithet, Point,

(*) See Vol. xviii. Page 316.

Point, and Antitheſis, will prevail; and we ſhall prepare for Slavery, by "babbling the Dialect of France."

Nothing could tend more to accelerate a Cataſtrophe of this Kind, than the Adoption of that Syſtem of Foppery and Immorality recommended by a late noble Author, enamoured almoſt to Diſtraction of the Language and Manners of our Neighbours upon the Continent. Learning and Religion would then no longer make a Part in the Education of our Youth. One would be baniſhed under the Notion of Pedantry, (*) the

(*) Knowledge that is of Uſe, muſt be allowed to be the greateſt and nobleſt Acqueſt that Man can gain, but to run on in Diſputations for Inſtruction, whether Privation be a Principle; whether any thing can be made of nothing; whether there be any empty Space in the Compaſs of Nature; or whether the World ſhall have an End, and ſuch like, is without End, and to no End. A Man is never a Jot the more learned for this Curioſity, but much the more troubleſome: - Are not thoſe Speculations of much more Importance, that teach us our Duty to Providence, to our Neighbour, and to ourſelves; to maſter our Appetites, and to renounce the World? - Indeed, it hath been remarked that ſubtle Speculations, and all the Refinements of Science, ſerved to ſpoil the Underſtanding, and corrupt the Heart; for which Reaſon the Apoſtle made little Account of them. "Foliſh Queſtions and Geneologies, which gender Strife, avoid."

Above all things, we ſhould be careful never to diſpute againſt Judgment to ſhew our Wit, leſt we become indifferent to what is right: never to diſpute againſt a Man merely to vex him, or for Tryal of Skill, ſince to inform, or be informed, is the End of all Conferences. Poverty of Imagination makes Men run into the Fault

the other excluded by the Name of Superſtition. Travel and a Knowledge of the World, it ſeems, may ſupply the Place of both. (*) To know the World, is doubtleſs expedient; in ſome Circumſtances, neceſſary. But a Man ſhould know many other Things before he enters upon that Study, or he will do well not to enter upon it at all. (‡) Let

Fault of giving Contradictions; they want in their Minds Entertainment for themſelves and Company, and therefore build all they ſpeak upon what is ſtarted by others; and ſince they cannot improve that Foundation, endeavour to deſtroy it. Contradiction ſhould awaken our Attention and Care, but not our Paſſion; we muſt be of no Side or Intereſt but that of Truth. See the Note, Vol. viii. Page 317. on Pedantry.

(*) As to Travelling, or making the Grand Tower of the World, (tho the Wiſe Man "knew many things by it, and ſaw and underſtood more than he could expreſs," and affirms that it makes us prudent,) we would only obſerve that Nature has been very fruitful of Wonders in theſe Kingdoms, that compoſe the Britiſh Monarchy; and it is a ridiculous Cuſtom, that Gentlemen of Fortune ſhould be carried away with a Deſire of ſeeing the Curioſities of other Countries, before they have any tolerable Inſight into their own.

Et quæ tanta fuit Romam *tibi Cauſa videndi?*

Travelling ſometimes makes a wiſe Man better; but always a Fool worſe.

(‡) As Study makes a greater Difference between a Scholar and an ignorant Man, than there is between an ignorant Man and a Brute; (ſee Note (*), Vol. xviii. Page 296,) ſo the Air of the World makes as great a Diſtinction between a polite and learned Perſon. Tho' Languages are not to be deſpiſed, yet Things are

Let him lay in a Stock, and that no moderate one, of

still to be preferred; which, in Truth, is of so great Use to those who are Masters of it, that it supplies, in a great Measure, or however covers, the Defects of Education in other Regards: and there are Men, who, upon the bare Advantage of it, not only acquit themselves, in the most eminent Stations, with Honour and Applause, but have the Art of engaging other Persons in their own, or the Interests of their Friends, with a wonderful Facility, and after a Manner, which all the Philosophy in the World, would never have dictated to mere learned Men. The Want of it, indeed, many Times only betrays learned Men into greater Indiscretions, and to give them (what never pleases) an Air of Singularity or Affectation; Whereas this refines and gives a better Lustre to all other Parts of Knowledge; which, though, in Conjunction with it, they are generally necessary towards forming a great and useful Man; yet, separately, in all the Affairs of human Life, the Knowledge of the World is of more Use towards rendering Men of any Consideration in Society, either to themselves or others, than the Knowledge of all the Sciences, without it.

Nothing hath so much exposed Men of Learning to Contempt and Ridicule as their Ignorance of Things, which are known to all but themselves. Those who have been taught to look upon the Institutions of Schools, as giving the last Perfection to human Abilities, are surprized to see Men wrinkled with Study, yet wanting to be instructed in the minute Circumstances of Propriety, or the necessary Forms of daily Transaction; and quickly shake off their Reverence for Modes of Education, which they find to produce no Ability above the rest of Mankind.

The Student, therefore, must learn, by Commerce with Mankind, to reduce his Speculations to Practice, and accommodate his Knowledge to the Purposes of Life. Whereas, it is too common for those who have been bred up to Scholastic Professions, and pass-

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of useful Learning and sound Principles, else he will set-out

ed much of their Time in Places of Learning, where nothing else is honoured, to disregard every other Qualification, and to imagine that they shall find Mankind ready to pay Homage to their Knowledge, and croud about them for Instruction. They therefore step out from their Cells into the World with all the Confidence of Authority, and Dignity of Importance; they look round about them at once with Ignorance & Scorn on a Race of Beings to whom they are equally unknown and equally contemptible, but whose Manners they must imitate, and with whose Opinions they must comply, if they desire to pass their Time happily among them.

To lessen that Disdain with which Scholars are inclined to look on the common Business of the World, and the Unwillingness with which they condescend to learn what is not to be found in any System of Philosophy, it may be necessary to consider, that tho' Admiration is excited by abstruse Researches and remote Discoveries, yet Pleasure is not given, nor Affection conciliated, but by softer Accomplishments, and Qualities more easily communicable to those about us. He that can only converse upon Questions, about which only a small Part of Mankind has Knowledge sufficient to make them curious, must lose his Days in unsocial Silence, and live in the Crowd of Life without a Companion. He that can only be useful in great Occasions, may die without exerting his Abilities, and stand a helpless Spectator of a thousand Vexations which fret away Happiness, and which nothing is required to remove but a little Dexterity of Conduct and Readiness of Expedients.

No Degree of Knowledge attainable by Man is able to set him above the Want of hourly Assistance, or to extinguish the Desire of some Endearments, and tender Officiousness; and therefore no One should think it unnecessary to learn those Arts by which Friendship may be gained. Kindness is preserved by a constant Reciprocation of Benefits and Interchange of Pleasures; but such Benefits can only

set out upon his Travels; or he will be little the better for

ly can be bestowed, as others are capable of receiving; and such Pleasures only imparted as others are qualified to enjoy.

In a Word, Nothing goes so far in the Happiness of our Lives, as to know things really as they are; and this Knowledge is to be acquired by frequent Converse with, and Reflection upon Men and Manners, and the several Affairs of the World, rather than by the Perusal of Books, and can only be had by Experience.

By this Descent from the Pinacles of Art, no Honour will be lost; for the Condescensions of Learning are always over-paid by Gratitude. An elevated Genius, employed in little things, appears like the Sun in his Evening-Declination; he remits his Splendor, but retains his Magnitude; and pleases more, tho he dazzles less.

To know Mankind well, requires as much Attention and Application, as to know Books, and, it may be, more Sagacity and Discernment; you cannot acquire this Knowledge in the frivolous Chit-chat of idle Companions; no: you must go deeper, and look into People, as well as at them. *Homines non numerandi, sed ponderandi.* Watch, therefore, with the greatest Care, and examine the Characters of all you converse with, endeavour to discover their predominant Passions, their prevailing Weaknesses, their Vanities, their Follies and Humours, with all their right and wrong Springs of Action, which make such inconsistent and whimsical Beings of us, rational Creatures.

The first Thing to know Mankind, is, to keep your own Temper & Countenance, (i.e.) to be as much Master of yourself as coolly and deliberately to investigate the Characters of others, while you do not lay open yourself too much to their Inspection.

The next Thing, is, to observe the different Ways to gain Ascendency over any one; thus some People are to be reasoned, some flattered, some intimidated, and some teized into a thing, but in general all are to be brought into it at last, if skilfully applied to, properly

for having ſeen the World, though the World may be ſome-

perly managed, and indefatigably attacked in their ſeveral weak Places. (See Note (*), Vol. viii. Page 154,)

The Time ſhould likewiſe be judiciouſly choſen, *(in Tempore ad eam veni, quod omnium Rerum eſt optimum.*— Terence) and you would chuſe your Time very ill if you applied to a Man about one Buſineſs, while his head was full of another, or when his Heart was full of Grief, Anger, or any other Diſagreeable Sentiment. In Order to judge of the Inſide of others, ſtudy your own, for Men in general are very much alike, and though One has one prevailing Paſſion and another has another, yet their Operations are much the ſame, and whatever pleaſes or offends you in others will pleaſe or offend others in you; for Inſtance, if diſagreeable Inſinuations, ſly Sneers, or repeated Contradictions, teaze and irritate you, you may be ſure they would do the ſame to others, if you acted thus towards them; ſo likewiſe if you feel yourſelf hurt and mortified when another makes you feel his Superiority in Knowledge, Parts, Rank, or Fortune, you will certainly take great Care not to make a Perſon, whoſe Friendſhip or Intereſt you would gain, feel that Superiority in you, in Caſe you have it.

Do not praiſe or condemn *haſtily*, or by *Wholeſale*. It requires ſome Time to know *moſt* Perſons, and a long Time to know *ſome*; it is not frequently being in Company with Perſons that will fully diſcover them to you, becauſe in Company they may uſe Diſguiſe, but if you can be in an Houſe with them for a conſiderable Time, and obſerve all their Conduct, and in a particular Manner watch their Pleaſures, you may find out their real Character.

It is very unjuſt as well as illiberal to condemn Perſons for their Infirmities and Imperfections, for even a virtuous Man is not at all Times like himſelf, the moſt ſenſible will ſometimes ſay & do weak things, and the moſt Courageous in ſome things diſcover Fear; ſo alſo there are very few unamiable Perſons who have not ſomething to recommend them. (Serm. CCCXC.) Be-

ſomewhat the merrier for having ſeen him. If he go out an Ignoramus, he will return a Profligate, with the Atheiſt ingrafted upon him.

As to the Buſineſs of the Graces—before the Gloſs can be given, a Subſtance muſt be prepared to receive it; and ſolid Bodies take the brighteſt Poliſh.

Thus much for the Wiſdom we are exhorted to acquire, and the Methods of acquiring it. I ſhall now,

Laſtly, Add a few Words upon the Advantages attending ſuch Acquiſition, to the Individual himſelf, and to the Community.

To the Individual, Wiſdom is indeed, (as Solomon properly ſtiles it) "the principal thing." The Seat of its Reſidence is in the nobleſt Part of the human Compoſition; and that noble Part it renders ſtill more noble. What elſe gives to Man the Superiority over Brutes;

Be cautious reſpecting thoſe who are very intimate at a ſlight Acquaintance with you; Theſe are, in general, fickle Perſons, and will moſt likely ſoon leave you, therefore never truſt them with your Secrets, or place much Confidence in them.

Finally, never neglect old, for the Sake of new Acquaintances, which would be ungrateful on your Part, and never forgiven on theirs. Make as many perſonal Friends, and as few perſonal Enemies as poſſible. We do not mean by perſonal Friends, intimate and confidential Friends, of which no Man can hope to have many; but we mean Friends in the common Acceptation of the Word, (i.e) People who ſpeak well of you, and would rather do you Good than Harm, conſiſtent with their own Intereſt, and no further.

Brutes; to Angels over Man; and to the Omniſcient over all his Creatures? "The Lord is a God of Knowledge; and Wiſdom was with him from Eternity."

The Pleaſures of Wiſdom exceed all others, in Kind, Degree, and Duration, far as Heaven is higher than Earth. (*) "Her Ways are Ways of Pleaſantneſs, and all her Paths are Peace." A ſtudious Diſpoſition makes thoſe who are bleſſed with it valuable, good, and happy. It enables them to find a Paradiſe in Solitude, and profitably as well as agreeably to fill up the Intervals of Buſineſs. It renders them little ſenſible to the Allurements of external Objects, to thoſe Trifles and Improprieties which diſgrace the Man, and degrade the Chriſtian. The Ill-inſtructed and Unemployed are the Perſons whoſe Imagination is always wandering and afloat. For Want of ſolid Nouriſhment, their Curioſity and their Appetites turn to Objects either vain or dangerous; and hence proceed all thoſe Inventions for ſquandering away Thought and Time, which generally end in a Forgetfulneſs of God and ourſelves. It is incredible what Inconveniences are avoided by thoſe who can paſs their vacant Hours with

(*) *Ut Sol omnibus Terris Lumen ſuum præbet, ità Doctrina omni Vitæ Statu utilis et jucunda. Ut Flamma Ligni quotidiè magis ac magis accenditur; ſic Animus, Virtute præditus, Literis nunquàm ſatiatur. Incitat Mentem ipſa Artium Dulcedo.* Serm. CCCXC.

with Books and their own Thoughts. Happy they, who are diſguſted with violent Pleaſures, and know how to be pleaſed with the Sweets of an innocent Life, who delight in Inſtruction, and find a Satisfaction in cultivating their Minds with Knowledge. Into whatever Situation adverſe Fortune may throw them, they always carry Entertainment with them; and the Diſquiet, which preys on others in the midſt of their Pleaſures, is unknown to thoſe who can employ themſelves in Reading.

Let it be added, that this Happineſs is One which as the World does not give, ſo neither can it take away. It will never leave us, but continue a faſt and firm Friend, when every other Pleaſure ſhall have forſaken us. (*) Wiſdom will comfort us in the Day of Sorrow, and ſupport us in the Hour of Death. Like the holy Ark accompanying the Camp of Iſrael, ſhe will go with us over Jordan, and conduct us to our Inheritance in the Land of Promiſe. "Exalt her," ſays the Wiſe Man, (in the Words immediately following the Text,) "exalt her, and ſhe ſhall promote thee; ſhe ſhall bring thee to Honour when thou doſt embrace her: ſhe ſhall give to thine Head an Ornament of Grace; a Crown of Glory ſhall ſhe deliver to thee."

To a Community the Advantages of Wiſdom are many and great. A Nation glories not leſs in the Learn-

(*) See Vol. xviii. Page 340.

Learning than in the Valour of her Sons. Long and illuſtrious is the Train of literary Heroes, which Britain beholds with an honeſt and conſcious Pride, who from Age to Age have filled the moſt exalted Stations both in Church and State, or preſided in the different Departments of Science, or from the Shades of an honourable and lettered Retirement, ſent forth their Writings for the Entertainment & Inſtruction of Mankind.

My younger Brethren, (for I yet ſpeak to you) the Hope of the riſing Generation, our future Joy and Crown, all theſe were Men like yourſelves, trained in the ſame Courſe of Education. Think of their Examples, and emulate their Fame. The Trophies of Miltiades, you know, would not ſuffer Themiſtocles to ſleep. — Hear, again *, the Author of the Book of Eccleſiaſticus upon this Subject.

"Let us now praiſe famous Men, and our Fathers that begat us. The Lord hath wrought great Glory by them, through his great Power, from the Beginning. Such as did bear-rule in their Kingdoms, Men renowned for their Power, giving Counſel by their Underſtanding, and declaring Prophecies: Leaders of the People by their Counſels, and by their Knowledge of Learning meet for the People; wiſe and eloquent in their Inſtructions. All theſe were honoured in their Generations,

(*) See Page 498.

tions, and were the Glory of their Times. Their Bodies are buried in Peace, but their Name liveth for evermore." While the World shall last, and any Regard be paid to that which deserves Regard, "the People will tell of their Wisdom, and the Congregation will shew forth their Praise."

To Conclude, If there is any thing lovely, if there is any thing desireable, if there is any thing within the Reach of Man, that is worthy of Praise, is it not Knowledge? and yet how few are there that attain unto it?

If thou wouldst mount up into the Throne, first bow thyself at her Footstool; if thou wouldst arrive at the Knowledge of her, first inform thyself of thine own Ignorance.

More worth is she than Pearls, therefore seek her carefully: the Emrald, and Sapphire, and the Ruby, are as Dirt beneath her Feet, therefore pursue her manfully. The Way to her is Labour; Attention is the Pilot that must conduct thee into her Paths. But weary not in the Way; for when thou art arrived at her, the Toil shall be to thee for Pleasure.

In a Word, — "If there is any thing lovely, if there be any Virtue, if there be any Praise, think on these things, meditate on them, give yourselves wholly to them." Time is on the wing. It flies, to return no more. Seize the Moments as they pass, and employ them

them to the beſt Advantage. Loſe not the golden Opportunity, the ſweet Hour of Prime, the Morning of Youth, Health, and Strength. Conquer the Difficulties at firſt ſetting out, and all will be Pleaſure ever after. Labour now, and comfortable will be your Reſt, when the Seaſon of Labour ſhall be over. "For glorious is the Fruit of Labour, and the Root of Wiſdom ſhall never fall away." Let the Sanctity of your Manners keep-pace with the Improvement of your Minds. To your Governors be reſpectful and obedient; to your Companions gentle and loving; to all, courteous and obliging. And that the divine Bleſſing may be upon you in what you do, remember to begin and end your Studies with Prayer. (*) "If any Man lack Wiſdom, let him aſk of God." Let him aſk that, as the Son of David did, and all things elſe, judged proper for him, ſhall be added to it. Pray therefore that God would "give you Wiſdom that ſitteth by his Throne, and reject you not from among his Children: that he would ſend her out of his holy Heavens, and from the Throne of his Glory, that being preſent, ſhe may labour with you, that you may know what is pleaſing unto him. For ſhe knoweth and underſtandeth

(*) *Huic omne Principium, Huic refer Exitum.*
To Him your firſt Deſigns commend;
To Him refer your purpoſed End.
Serm. CCCXC.

derstandeth all things, and she shall lead you soberly in your Doings, and preserve you by her Power. So shall your Works be acceptable in the Sight of Heaven and Earth, bringing Glory to God, Credit to your Instructors, Comfort to your Friends, Honour to yourselves, and Benefit to Men.

Sermon

SERMON CCCXCI.

On religious Wiſdom.

Rom. xvi. 19. "I would have you wiſe unto that "which is good."

The Advice of Solomon, reſpecting Wiſdom, (as we have already ſeen, *) is, that we ſtrenuouſly endeavour to acquire it, aſſuring us that it is "the principal thing." But as many make a falſe Uſe of their Wiſdom and Learning, "cauſing Diviſions and Offences contrary to the Doctrine which they have learned, ſerving not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but their own Belly, and by good Words and fair Speeches deceive the Hearts of the ſimple," I ſhall, with the Apoſtle, go on further to enforce it, and direct you to the true Ends and Object of it. "I would have you wiſe unto that which is good, and ſimple concerning evil."

To enter into a minute Diſcuſſion of what is good, would be to recount all the Injunctions of Religion, whether Natural or Revealed. Leaving this, therefore, to be gathered by every Man from Reaſon and the whole Volume of Scripture, I ſhall only diſcern the Im-

(*) In the preceding Diſcourſe.

Importance of ſuch Wiſdom to general Happineſs.

In Order to this, we ſhall here again conſider Man, (as we have already done, *)

Firſt, As an Individual. And then,

Secondly, As a Member of Society. And,

Firſt, Conſidering Man as an Individual, let us enquire how far religious Wiſdom is important, 1ſt. to his Improvement; and 2dly, to his Conſolation.

Firſt, With Reſpect to the Improvement of Man; the Advancement of his Nature in what is valuable and uſeful, the Acquiſition of ſuch Diſpoſitions and Habits as fit him for acting his Part with Propriety on this Stage, and prepare him for a higher State of Action hereafter; what Benefit does he receive, in theſe Reſpects, from religious Knowledge and Belief? It is obvious, that all Increaſe of Knowledge is Improvement to the Underſtanding. The more that its Sphere is enlarged, the greater and better the Objects that are ſubmitted to its View, eſpecially when theſe Objects are intrinſic Excellence, the more muſt thoſe rational Powers, which are the Glory of Man, be in the Courſe of attaining their proper Strength and Maturity. But were the Knowledge of Religion merely ſpeculative, though the Speculation muſt be admitted to be noble, yet leſs could be ſaid of its Importance. — Upon this View

(*) Page 516, on human Wiſdom.

View it is that the Apoſtle recommends it to Mankind, that it might form the Heart, and direct the Life. "I would have you wiſe to that which is good."

This Tendency is by various Cauſes defeated. Between the Belief of religious Principles, and a correſpondent Practice, it will be alleged that frequent Experience ſhews there is no neceſſary Connection; and that therefore the Acquiſition of the one, cannot give us any Aſſurance of proportionable Improvements following in the other. This, in Part, is granted to be true; as we admit that religious Knowledge and Belief are ſuſceptible of various Degrees, before they arrive at that real Chriſtian Faith which the Scripture repreſents as "purifying the Heart." But though the Connection between Principle and Practice be not neceſſary and invariable, it will not, we ſuppoſe, be denied, that there is ſome Connection. Here one Avenue to the Heart is opened. And if the Tendency of religious Knowledge be good, Wiſdom muſt direct, and Duty oblige us to acquire it. For Tendency will, at leaſt in ſome Caſes, riſe into Effect; and, probably, in more Caſes than are known and obſerved by the World. Beſides the diſtinguiſhed Examples of true Religion and Virtue, which have, more or leſs, adorned every Age of the Chriſtian Æra, what Numbers may there be, in the more ſilent and private Scenes of Life,

over-looked by superficial Observers of Mankind, on whose Hearts and Lives religious Principles have the most happy Influence. Even on loose and giddy Minds, where they are far from accomplishing their full Effect, their Influence is frequently, not altogether loſt. Impreſſions of Religion often check Vice in its Career. They prevent it from proceeding its utmoſt Length, and though they do not entirely reform the Offender, they ſerve to maintain Order in Society. Perſons who are now bad, might probably have been worſe without them, and the World have ſuffered more from unreſtrained Licentiouſneſs. They often ſow latent Seeds of Goodneſs in the Heart, which proper Circumſtances and Occaſions afterwards ripen; though the Reformation of the Offender may not be ſo conſpicuous, as his former Enormities have been.

From the native Tendency of religious Belief, there is Reaſon to conclude, that thoſe good Effects of it are not ſo rare as ſome would repreſent them. By its Nature and Tendency, we can better judge of its Effects, than by Obſervations drawn from a ſuppoſed Experience, which often is narrow in its Compaſs, and fallacious in its Concluſions.

The actual Influence of Principle and Belief on Mankind, admits of clear Illuſtration from unconteſted Matter of Fact. They who hold the good Effects of

Chriſtian

Christian Principles to be so inconsiderable, as to render the Acquisition of them of small Importance will be at no Loss to give us Instances of corrupt Principles of Belief having had the most powerful Influence on the World. Loud Complaints we hear from this Quarter of the direful Effects which Superstition and Enthusiasm have produced; of their having poisoned the Tempers, and transformed the Manners of Men; of their having overcome the strongest Restraints of Law, of Reason, and Humanity. Is this, then, the Case, that all Principles, except good ones, are of such mighty Energy? — Strange! that false Religion should be able to do so much, and true Religion so little; that Belief, so powerful in the one Case, should be so impotent in the other. No impartial Inquirer, surely can entertain this Opinion. The whole History of Mankind shows that their religious Tenets and Principles, of whatever Nature they be, are of great Influence in forming their Character, and directing their Conduct. The Mischief which false Principles have done, affords a good Argument to guard carefully against Error; but as it is a Proof of what Belief can do, it gives Ground to hope the more from it, when rightly directed. The same Torrent which, when it is put out of its natural Course, overflows and lays waste a Country, adorns and enriches it, when running in its proper Channel. (Serm. CCCXCI.) If

If it be alleged that Superstition is likely to be more powerful in its Effects than Truth, because it agrees better with the Follies and Corruptions of the World, we may oppose to this, on the other Hand, that Truth has the divine Blessing and the Countenance of Heaven on its Side. Let us alway hope well of a Cause that is good in itself, and highly beneficial to us; Truth is mighty, and will prevail. Let us imbibe the "incorruptible Seed" as strongly as we can, and trust in God that he will give the Increase.

Having thus shewn the Importance of religious Knowledge to Mankind in the Ways of Improvement, let us, — Now,

2dly, Consider it in the Light of Consolation; as bringing Aid and Relief to us amidst the Distresses of Life. Here Religion incontestibly triumphs; and its happy Effects, in this Respect, furnish a strong Argument to every thinking Mind for striving to acquire and ingraft them more deeply on his Heart. For without the Belief and Hope afforded by divine Revelation, the Circumstances of Man are extremely forlorn. He finds himself placed here as a Stranger in a vast Universe, where the Powers and Operations of Nature are very imperfectly known; where both the Beginnings and the Issues of things are involved in mysterious Darkness; where he is unable to discover, with

any

any Certainty, whence he ſprung, or for what Purpoſe he was brought into this State of Exiſtence; whether he be ſubjected to the Government of a mild, or of a wrathful Ruler; what Conſtruction he is to put on many of the Diſpenſations of his Providence; and what his Fate is to be when he departs hence. What a diſconſolate Situation to a ſerious inquiring Mind! The greater Degree of Virtue it poſſeſſes, its Senſibility is likely to be the more oppreſſed by this Burden of labouring Thought. Even though it were in One's Power to baniſh all uneaſy Thought, and to fill-up the Hours of Life with perpetual Amuſement, Life ſo filled up would, upon Reflection, appear poor and trivial. But theſe are far from being the Terms upon which Man is brought into this World. He is conſcious that his Being is frail and feeble; he ſees himſelf beſet with various Dangers; and is expoſed to many a melancholy Apprehenſion, from the Evils which he may have to encounter, before he arrives at the Cloſe of Life. In this diſtreſſed Condition, to be poſſeſſed of ſuch Diſcoveries of the Supreme Being as the Chriſtian Religion affords, is to be poſſeſſed of a Father and a Friend; is to let-in a Ray of the moſt cheering Light upon the Darkneſs of the human Eſtate. He who was before a deſtitute Orphan, wandering in the inhoſpitable Deſert, here gaineth a Shelter from

bitter and inclement Blast. He now knows to whom to pray, and in whom to trust; where to unbosom his Sorrows; and from what Hand to look for Relief.

It is certain, that when the Heart bleeds from some Wound of recent Misfortune, nothing is of equal Efficacy with religious Comfort. It is of Power to enlighten the darkest Hour, and to assuage the severest Woe, by the Belief of divine Favour, and the Prospect of a blessed Immortality. In such Hopes, the Mind expatiates with Joy; and, when bereaved of its earthly Friends, solaces itself with the Thoughts of one Friend, who will never forsake it. Refined Reasonings concerning the Nature of the human Condition, and the Improvement which Philosophy teaches us to make of every Event, may entertain the Mind when it is at Ease; may perhaps contribute to sooth it, when slightly touched with Sorrow. But when it is torn with sore Distress, they are cold and feeble, compared with a direct Promise from the Word of God, which is an "Anchor to the Soul both sure and stedfast." This has given Consolation and Refuge to many a virtuous Heart, at a Time when the most cogent Reasonings would have proved utterly unavailing.

Upon the Approach of Death, especially when, if a Man thinks at all, his Anxiety about his future Interests must naturally increase, the Power of religious Consolation

lation is ſenſibly felt. Then appears, in the moſt ſtriking Light, the high Value of the Diſcoveries made by the Goſpel; not only Life and Immortality revealed, but a Mediator with God diſcovered; Mercy proclaimed, through him, to the Frailties of the penitent and the humble; and his Preſence promiſed to be with them when they are paſſing through "the Valley of the Shadow of Death," in Order to bring them ſafe into unſeen Habitations of Reſt and Joy. (*) Here is Ground for their leaving the World with Comfort and Peace. But in this ſevere and trying Period, this labouring Hour of Nature, how ſhall the unhappy Man ſupport himſelf, who knows not, or believes not, the Diſcoveries of Religion? Secretly conſcious to himſelf that he has not acted his Part as he ought to have done, the Sins of his paſt Life ariſe before him in ſad Remembrance. He wiſhes to exiſt after Death, and yet dreads that Exiſtence. The Governour of the World is unknown. He cannot tell whether every Endeavour to obtain his Mercy may not be vain. All is awful Obſcurity around him; and in the midſt of endleſs Doubts and Perplexities, the trembling, reluctant Soul is forced away from the Body. As the Misfortunes of Life muſt, to ſuch a Man, have been moſt op-

(*) See Vol. vi. Page 409—431. on the Benefit of Religion in affording Peace to the Mind. Serm. CCCXCI.

oppreſſive, ſo its End is bitter. His Sun ſets in a dark Cloud; and the Night of Death cloſes over his Head, full of Miſery.

Having thus ſhewn the Importance of Religious Wiſdom, both to the Improvement and the Conſolation of Man, conſidered as an Individual, I am now to ſhew,

Secondly, How important this Knowledge is to him as a Member of Society. This Branch of the Subject is in Part anticipated by what has been ſaid. For all the Improvement which Man receives as an Individual, redounds to the Benefit of the Public. Society reaps the Fruit of the Virtues of all the Members who compoſe it; and in Proportion as each, apart, is made better, the Whole muſt flouriſh.

But beſides this Effect, religious Knowledge has a direct Tendency to improve the ſocial Intercourſe of Men, and to aſſiſt them in co-operating for common Good. It is the great Inſtrument of civilizing the Multitude, and forming them to Union. It tames the Fierceneſs of their Paſſions, and ſoftens the Rudeneſs of their Manners. There is much Reaſon to doubt whether any regular Society ever ſubſiſted, or could ſubſiſt, in the World, deſtitute of all religious Ideas and Principles. They who, in early Times, attempted to bring the wandering and ſcattered Tribes of

Men

Men from the Woods, and to unite them in Cities and Communities, always found it neceſſary to begin with ſome Inſtitution of Religion. The wiſeſt Legiſlators of old, through the whole Progreſs of their Syſtems of Government, conſidered Religion as eſſential to Civil Polity. If even thoſe imperfect Forms of it, loaded with ſo much Superſtition and Error, were important to the Welfare of Society, how much more that reaſonable Worſhip of the true God, which is taught by the Goſpel? True Religion introduces the Idea of regular Subjection, by accuſtoming Mankind to the Awe of ſuperior Power in the Deity, joined with the Veneration of ſuperior Wiſdom and Goodneſs. It is by its Nature an aſſociating Principle; and creates new and ſacred Bonds of Union among Men. Common Aſſemblies for religious Worſhip, and joint Meſſages offered up to one God; the Senſe of being all dependent on the ſame Protection, and bound to Duty by the ſame Ties, Sharers in the ſame Benefits of Heaven, and Expectants of the ſame Reward, tend to awaken the Sentiments of friendly Relation, and to confirm and ſtrengthen our mutual Connexion. The Doctrine of Chriſtianity is moſt adverſe to all Tyranny and Oppreſſion, but highly favourable to the Intereſts of good Government among Men. It repreſſes the Spirit of Licentiouſneſs and Sedition. It inculcates

the Duty of Subordination to lawful Superiors. It requires us "to fear God, to honour the King, and not to meddle with them that are given to change."

Religious Wisdom forwards all useful and ornamental Improvements in Society. Experience shows, that, in Proportion as it diffuses its Light, Learning flourishes, and liberal Arts are cultivated and advanced. Just Conceptions of Religion promote a free and manly Spirit. They lead Men to think for themselves; to form their Principles upon fair Inquiry, and not to resign their Consciences to the Dictates of Men. Hence they naturally inspire Aversion to Slavery of every Kind, and promote a Taste for Liberty and Laws. Despotic Governments have generally taken the deepest Root among Nations that were blinded by Mahometan or Pagan Darkness; where the Throne of Violence has been supported by Ignorance and false Religion. In the Christian World, during those Centuries in which gross Superstition held its Reign undisturbed, Oppression and Slavery were in its Train. The Cloud of Ignorance sat thick and deep over the Nations, and the World was threatened with a Relapse into ancient Barbarity. As soon as the true Wisdom revived, at the auspicious Æra of the Reformation, Learning, Liberty, and Arts, began to shine forth with it, and to resume their Lustre.

But

But the happy Influence which Religion exerts on Society, extends much further than to Effects of this Kind. It is not only ſubſidiary to the Improvement, but neceſſary to the Preſervation of Society. It is the very Baſis on which it reſts. Religious Principle is what gives Men the ſureſt Hold of one another. That laſt and greateſt Pledge of Veracity, an Oath, without which no Society could ſubſiſt, derives its whole Authority from an eſtabliſhed Reverence of God, to whom it is a ſolemn Appeal. (*) Baniſh religious Principle, and you looſen all the Bonds which connect Mankind together; you ſhake the fundamental Pillar of mutual Confidence and Truſt; you render the Security ariſing from Laws, in a great Meaſure, void and ineffectual. For human Laws, and human Sanctions, cannot extend to numberleſs Caſes, in which the Safety of Mankind is deeply concerned. They would prove very feeble Inſtruments of Order and Peace, if there were no Checks upon the Conduct of Men from the Senſe of divine Legiſlation; if no Belief of future Rewards and Puniſhments were to over-awe Conſcience, and to ſupply the Defects of human Government.

Indeed, the Belief of Religion is of ſuch Importance to public Welfare, that the moſt expreſſive Deſcription

(*) See the Diſcourſe on this Subject, in the 8th Vol. Serm. CCCXCI.

ſcription we could give of a Society of Men in the utmoſt Diſorder, would be to ſay, that there was no Fear of God left among them. Imagination would immediately conceive of them as abandoned to Rapine and Violence, to Perfidy and Treachery; as deceiving and deceived, oppreſſing and oppreſſed; conſumed by inteſtine Broils, and ripe for becoming a Prey to the firſt Invader. On the other Hand, in Order to form the Idea of a Society flouriſhing in its higheſt Glory, we need only conceive the Belief of Chriſtian Principles exerting its full Influence on the Hearts and Lives of all the Members: And inſtantly, the moſt amiable Scene would open to our View. We ſhould ſee the Cauſes of public Diſunion removed, when Men were animated with that noble Spirit of Love and Charity which our Religion breathes; and formed to the Purſuit of thoſe higher Intereſts, which give no Occaſion to Competition and Jealouſy. We ſhould ſee Families, Neighbourhoods, and Communities, living in unbroken Amity, and purſuing, with one Heart and Mind, the common Intereſt; Sobriety of Manners, and Simplicity of Life, reſtored; virtuous Induſtry carrying on its uſeful Labours, and cheerful Contentment every where reigning. Politicians may lay down what Plans they pleaſe for advancing public Proſperity; but, in Truth, it is the Prevalency of ſuch Principles

ciples of Religion and Virtue, which forms the Strength and Glory of a Nation. When theſe are totally wanting, no Meaſures contrived by human Wiſdom can ſupply the Defect. In Proportion as they prevail, they raiſe the State of Society from that ſad Degeneracy into which it is at preſent ſunk; and carry it forward, under the Bleſſing of Heaven, towards that happy Period, when "Nation ſhall not lift up Sword againſt Nation, nor learn War any more."

In Order to prove the Importance of religious Wiſdom to the Intereſt of Society, one Conſideration more, deſerving particular Attention, remains to be mentioned: [viz] that if "good Seed" be not ſown in the Field, "Tares" will infallibly ſpring up. The Propenſion towards Religion is ſtrong in the human Heart. There is a natural Preparation in our Minds, for receiving ſome Impreſſions of ſupernatural Belief. Upon theſe, among ignorant and uncultivated Men, Superſtition or Enthuſiaſm never fail to graft themſelves. Into what monſtrous Forms theſe have ſhot-forth, and what various Miſchiefs they have produced to Society, is too well known. Nor is this the whole of the Danger. Deſigning Men are always ready to take Advantage of this popular Weakneſs, and to direct the ſuperſtitious Bias of the Multitude to their own ambitious and intereſted Ends. Superſtition, in

itſelf a formidable Evil, threatens Conſequences, ſtill more formidable, when it is rendered the Tool of Deſign and Craft. Hence ariſes one of the moſt powerful Arguments for acquiring with Zeal, as far as our Abilities will enable us, the pure and undefiled Doctrines of the Goſpel of Chriſt; in Order that juſt and rational Principles of Religion may fill up that Room in our Minds, which dangerous Fanaticiſm will otherwiſe uſurp.

SERMON CCCXCII.

Duties of middle Age.

1 Cor. xiii. 11. "When I became a Man, I put-
"away Childish things."

"To every thing (says the Wise Man) there is a Season; and a Time to every Purpose under Heaven."

As there are Duties which belong to different Stations of Fortune; so there are Duties also which result from particular Periods of human Life. (*) In every Part of it, indeed, that comprehensive Rule takes-place, "Fear God, and keep his Commandments; for, this is the Whole of Man."

Piety to God, and Charity to Men, are incumbent upon Persons of every Age, as soon as they can think or act. Yet these Virtues in different Stages of Life, assume different Forms; and they appear with peculiar Grace.

(*) *Consule Vir, fac Vota Senex, Juvenisque labora.*

Gracefulneſs, when ſuited to their proper Age. They give Propriety to Conduct, and add Dignity to Character.

Of the Virtues which adorn Youth, I have already treated, and diſſuaded from their ſeveral Follies (*) The Duties, which reſpect Middle Age, are indeed, much larger. As this is the buſy Period of the Life of Man, it includes, in Effect, the whole Compaſs of Religion; and therefore cannot have its peculiar Characters ſo definitely marked and aſcertained.

At the ſame Time, during thoſe Years wherein any One is ſenſible that he has advanced beyond the the Confines of Youth, but has not yet paſſed into the Region of Old-age, there are ſeveral things which Reflection on this Portion of human Life ſuggeſts, or at leaſt ought to ſuggeſt to the human Mind. Inconſiderate muſt be he, who, in his gradual Progreſs thro Middle-Age, pauſes not at Times, to think, how far he is now receding from Youth; how near he draws to the Borders of declining Age; what Part it is incumbent on him to act; what Duties both God and the World have a Title to expect from him.

There are things eſpecially incumbent on thoſe of this Period of Life, and who are, for the moſt Part, the greateſt Bulk of Mankind. Youth ſoon ſlides away from us. At Old-age, but few of us arrive.

(*) In the preceding Volume. This

This therefore is the Time of Action; and many are the Duties of it. — I shall proceed regularly on them.

First, The first Duty of those who are become Men, is, (as the Text expresses it) "to put away childish things."

The Season of youthful Levities, Follies and Passions, is now over. These have had their Reign, a Reign perhaps too long; and to which a Termination is certainly proper at last. Much Indulgence is due to Youth. (*) Many things admit of Excuse then, which afterwards become unpardonable. Some things may even be graceful in Youth; which, if not criminal, are at least ridiculous, in Persons of maturer Years.

It is, therefore, a great Trial of Wisdom, to make the Transition proper; to assume the Character of Manhood, without exposing ourselves to Reproach, by an unseasonable Remainder of Juvenility, on the one Hand; or by too much Preciseness and disgusting Formality, on the other. Nature has placed certain Boundaries, by which she discriminates the Pleasures, Actions, and Employments, that are suited to the different Stages of human Life. It becomes us, neither to overleap those Boundaries by a Transition too hasty and violent; nor to remain too long on one Side of the Limit, when Nature calls us to pass over to the other. There

(*) *Adolescenti nihil est quod succenseam.* Serm. CCCXCII.

There are particularly two things, in which Middle Age ſhould preſerve its Diſtinction and Separation from Youth, theſe are, Levities of Behaviour, and intemperate Indulgence of Pleaſure.

The gay Spirits of the Young often prompt an inconſiderate Degree of Levity, ſometimes amuſing, ſometimes offenſive; but for which, tho betraying them occaſionally into ſerious Dangers, their Want of Experience may plead Excuſe. A more compoſed and manly Behaviour is expected in riper Years. The Affectation of youthful Vanities, degrades the Dignity of Mankind; even renders its Manners leſs agreeable; and by auk ward Attempts to pleaſe, produces Contempt. Cheerfulneſs is becoming in every Age. But the proper Cheerfulneſs of a Man is as different from the Levity of Youth, as the Flight of an Eagle is from the fluttering of the meaneſt Inſect in the Air.

As all unſeaſonable Returns to the Levity of Youth ought to be laid aſide, ſtill more are we to guard againſt theſe intemperate Indulgences of Pleaſure, to which the Young are but too prone. From theſe we cannot too ſoon retreat. They open the Path to Ruin, in every Period of our Days.

As long, however, as theſe Exceſſes are confined to the firſt Stage of Life, Hope is left, that when this Fever of the Spirits ſhall abate, Sobriety may gain the

Aſcendant, and wiſer Counſels have Power to influence the Conduct. — But,

After the Seaſon of Youth is paſt, if its intemperate Spirit remain; if, inſtead of liſtening to the Calls of Honour, and bending Attention to the Cares, and the Buſineſs of Men, the ſame Courſe of Idleneſs and Senſuality continue, the Caſe becomes more deſperate. A ſtrong Preſumption ariſes, that long Immaturity is to prevail; and that the Pleaſures and Paſſions of the Youth, are to ſink and overwhelm the Man.

Difficult, we confeſs, it may prove to overcome the Attatchments which youthful Habits had for a long Time been forming. Hard, at the Beginning, the Taſk, to impoſe on our Conduct Reſtraints which are altogether unaccuſtomed and new. But this is a Trial which every One muſt undergo, in entering on new Scenes of Action, and new Periods of Life. Let thoſe, who are in this Situation, bethink themſelves, that All is now at Stake. Their Character and Honour, their future Fortune and Succeſs in the World, depend, in a great Meaſure, on the Steps they take, when firſt they appear on the Stage of active Life. (*) The World then looks to them with an obſerving Eye. It ſtudies their Behaviour; and interprets all their Motions, as Preſages of the Line of their future Conduct which

(*) See Vol. xix. Page 473.

which they mean to hold. Now therefore, it eſpecially concerns them "to put-away childiſh Things," to diſmiſs their former trifling Amuſements, and youthful Pleaſures, that they blaſt not the Hopes which their Friends are willing to conceive of them. Higher Occupations, more ſerious Cares, await you. Turn your Mind to the ſteady and manly Diſcharge of the Part you are now called upon to act. Which leads me,

2dly, To point out the particular Duties which open on thoſe who are in the middle Period of Life.

They are now come forward to that Field of Action where they are to mix in all the Concerns of the World; where all human Powers are brought forth into full Exerciſe; where all that is conceived to be important in human Affairs is inceſſantly going on around them. The Time of Youth was the Preparation for future Action: This, therefore, is the Seaſon when we are expected to diſplay the Fruits which Education had prepared and ripened. In this World, all of us were formed to be Aſſiſtants to one another. The Wants of Society call for every Man's Labour, and require various Parts to be filled up; whether to rule, or obey; to defend from diſtant Danger, or to maintain internal Peace and Order; to provide the Conveniences of Life, or promote the Improvement of the Mind; to labour, to contrive, or direct: – In ſhort, within the Sphere

of

of Society there is Employment for all; and, in the Courſe of theſe Employments, many a moral Duty is to be performed; many a religious Grace to be exerciſed. No One is permitted to be a mere Blank in the World. No Rank nor Station, no Dignity of Birth, nor Extent of Poſſeſſions, exempt any Man from contributing his Share to the publick Welfare. This is the Precept of God. This is the Voice of Nature. This is the juſt Demand of the human Race upon one another.

Let no Man, therefore, imagine that he is of no Importance, and has, upon that Account, a Privilege to triſle away his Days at Pleaſure. "TALENTS" have been given to all; to ſome more, to others leſs.

"Occupy with theſe till I come," is the Command of the great Maſter to all. Where ſuperior Abilities are poſſeſſed, or diſtinguiſhed Advantages of Fortune are enjoyed; there, a wider Range is afforded for uſeful Exertion, and the World is intitled to expect it.

But, — Among thoſe, who fill up the inferior Departments of Society, tho' their Sphere of Uſefulneſs be more contracted; yet, no One is left intirely inſignificant.

The Diſcharge of the Duties ariſing from the various Relations, whether of ſocial, private, or domeſtick Life, forms a great Part of the Work aſſigned to the Middle Age of Man. Tho the Part we have to act,

may be confined within a narrow and humble Line; yet, if it be honourably acted, it will always attain its own Reward.

In fine, Induſtry, in all its various Forms, ought to inſpirit the manly Stage. This will add to it both Satisfaction and Dignity; and make the Current of our Years, as they paſs, flow in a clear and equable Stream, without the putrid Stagnation of Sloth and Idleneſs.

Idleneſs is the great Corrupter of Youth, and the Bane and Diſhonour of Middle Age. He who, in the Prime of Life, finds Time to hang heavy on his Hands, may, with much Reaſon, ſuſpect, that he has not conſulted the Duties which the Conſideration of his Age impoſes upon him; aſſuredly he has not conſulted his own Happineſs. — But, Amidſt the Affairs of the World let us not forget,

3dly, To guard with Vigilance and Care againſt the peculiar Dangers which attend the Period of Middle Life.

It is much to be regretted, that in the preſent State of things there is no Time of Man's Age in which its Virtue is not expoſed to Perils. Pleaſure lays its Snares for Youth; and, after the Seaſon of youthful Follies is paſt, other Temptations, no leſs formidable to Virtue, preſently ariſe. The Love of Pleaſure is ſucceeded by the Paſſion for Intereſt. In this Paſſion the

the whole Mind is too often abſorbed; and the Change thereby induced on the Character is of no amiable Kind.

Amidſt the Exceſſes of Youth, virtuous Affections often remain. The Attachments of Friendſhip, the Love of Honour, and the Warmth of Senſibility, give a Degree of Luſtre to the Character, and cover many a Failing. But Intereſt, when it is become the ruling Principle, both debaſes the Mind, and hardens the Heart. It deadens the Feeling of every thing that is ſublime and refined. It contracts the Affections within a narrow Circle, and extinguiſhes all thoſe Sparks of Generoſity & Tenderneſs which once were ſo lovely, and glowed with ſuch Ardor in the Breaſt.

In Proportion as worldly Purſuits multiply, and Competitions riſe, Ambition, Jealouſy, and Envy, combine with Intereſt to excite evil Paſſions, and to increaſe the Corruption of the Heart.

At firſt, perhaps, it was a Man's Intention to advance himſelf in the World by fair and laudable Methods only. He retained, for ſome Time, an Averſion to whatever appeared diſhonourable. But here, he is encountered by the Violence of an Enemy. There, he is ſupplanted by the Addreſs of a Rival. The Pride of a Superior inſults him. The Ingratitude of a Friend provokes him. Animoſities ruffle his Temper. Suſpicions poiſon his Mind. He finds the artful and

designing surrounding him on every Side. He views Corruption and Iniquity prevailing; the Modest neglected; the Forward and Crafty rising into Distinction. And, too easily, from the Example of others, he learns that Mystery of Vice, "The Way of the World." What he has learned, he finds necessary to practice for his own Defence; and of Course, assumes that supple and versatile Character, which he observes to be so frequent, and which oftentimes has appeared to him to be successful.

To these, and to many more Dangers of the same Kind, is the Man exposed who is deeply engaged in active Life. No small Degree of Firmness in religious Principles, therefore, and of Constancy in Virtue, is requisite in Order to prevent his being formed into a Likeness with the World, and carried-away by the "Multitude to do Evil."

Let him, therefore, call-to-mind those Principles which ought to fortify him against such Temptations to Vice. Let him often recollect that, whatever his Station in Life may be, he is a Man; he is a Christian. These are the chief Characters which he has to support; Characters superior far, if they be supported with Dignity, to any of the Titles with which Courts can decorate him; (*) superior to all that can be acquired in the Strife of a busy World. Let him think, that

(*) *Vilius est Argentum Auro, Virtutibus Aurum.*

that though it may be desireable to increase his Riches, and to advance his Rank; yet, what he ought to hold much more sacred, is, to maintain his Integrity and Honour. If these be forfeited, Wealth or Station will have but few Charms left. They will not be able to protect him long from sinking into Contempt in the Eye of an observing World. Even to his own Eye he will at last appear base and wretched.

Let not the Affairs of the World, then, entirely ingross his Time and Thoughts. From that contagious Air which he breaths in the midst of it, let him sometimes retreat into the salutary Shade, consecrated to Devotion and Wisdom. There, conversing seriously with his own Soul, and looking up to the Father of Spirits, let him study to calm those unquiet Passions, and to rectify those internal Disorders, which Intercourse with the World had excited and increased. (*)

In Order to render this Relief of the Mind more effectual, it will be highly proper,

4thly, That as we advance in the Course of Years, we often attend to the Lapse of Time, and to the Revolutions which these are ever effecting.

In this Meditation, one of the first Reflections which should

(*) See the Benefit of Retirement, to this Purpose; Vol. xvii. Page 383, &c. Serm. CCCXCII.

ſhould occur, is, how much we owe to that "God who hath hitherto helped us;" who hath brought us on ſo far in Life; hath guided us thro' the ſlippery Paths of Youth, and now enables us to flouriſh in the Strength of Manhood; and in Virtue of this Reflection, improve for the Time to come.

Look back to thoſe who ſtarted with you in the Race of Life. Think how many of them have fallen around you. Obſerve how many blank Spaces you can number in the Catalogue of thoſe who were once your Companions. If in the midſt of ſo much Devaſtation, you have been preſerved and bleſſed; conſider ſeriouſly what Returns you owe to the Goodneſs and Bounty of Heaven. Inquire whether your Conduct has correſponded with theſe Obligations; whether, in publick and in private, you have honoured, as became you, the God of your Fathers; and whether, amidſt the unknown Occurrences that are yet before you, you have Ground to hope for the continued Protection of the Almighty. Bring-to-mind the various Revolutions which you have beheld in human Affairs, ſince you became Actors on this buſy Scene. Reflect on the Changes which have taken-place in Men and Manners, in Opinions and Cuſtoms, in private Fortunes, and in public Conduct.

By the Obſervations you have made on theſe, and the

the Experience you have gained, have you improved proportionably in Wiſdom? Have the Changes of the World, which you have witneſſed, looſened all unreaſonable Attachment to it? Have they taught you this great Leſſon, that, while "the Faſhion of this World is ever paſſing away," only in God and in Virtue, Stability is to be found?

Of great Uſe, amidſt the Circle of the World, are ſuch Pauſes as theſe in Life; ſuch Reſting-places of Thought and Reflection; whence we can calmly and deliberately look back on the paſt, and anticipate the future.

To the Future, we are often caſting an eager Eye, and fondly ſtoring it, in our Imagination, with many a pleaſing Scene. But, if we would look to it like wiſe Men, let it be under the Perſuaſion, that it is nearly to reſemble the paſt, in bringing forward a Mixture of alternate Hopes and Fears, of Griefs and Joys. (*)

In Order to be prepared for whatever it may bring, let us cultivate that manly Fortitude of Mind, which, ſupported by a pious Truſt in God, will enable us to encounter properly the Viciſſitudes of our State. No Quality of the Mind is more neceſſary than this, to them who are paſſing thro that ſtormy Seaſon of Life of which we now treat. Softneſs and Effeminacy, let them

(*) See the Note, Vol. xiii. Page 160. Serm. CCCXCII.

them leave to the Young and Unexperienced, who are amuſing themſelves with florid Proſpects of Bliſs. But, to thoſe who are now engaged in the Middle of their Courſe, who are ſuppoſed to be well acquainted with the World, and to know that they have to ſtruggle in it with various Hardſhips, Firmneſs, Valour and Reſolution, are Diſpoſitions more ſuitable — This Armour of the Mind we muſt put on, if we would iſſue-forth into the Conteſt with any Proſpect of Succeſs.

While we thus ſtudy to correct the Errors, and to provide againſt the Dangers, which are peculiar to this Stage of Life; let us alſo,

5thly, Lay Foundation for Comfort in Old-age, which is a Period that all expect and hope to ſee; and to which, amidſt the Toils of the World, Men ſometimes look forward, not without Satisfaction, as to the Period of Retreat and Reſt. But, let them not deceive themſelves. A joyleſs and dreary Seaſon, it will prove, if they arrive at it with an unimproved, or corrupted Mind. For Old-age, as for every other thing, a certain Preparation is requiſite. And that Preparation conſiſts chiefly in three Particulars; in the Acquirement of Knowledge, of Friends, and Virtue.

Riches and Wealth, indeed, I need not mention: but tho this, by many, will be eſteemed a more material Acquiſition than all the reſt; yet, it may confident-

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ly be pronounced, that without theſe, all the Wealth we can lay up in Store, will prove inſufficient for making our latter Days paſs in Peace, and ſmoothly away.

Firſt, He who wiſhes to render his Old-age comfortable, ſhould ſtudy betimes to enlarge and improve his Mind with uſeful and intellectual Knowledge, by frequent Thought and Meditation on Things, on Men, and Manners. This will provide for him a great and noble Entertainment when other Entertainments leave him. This is a Treaſure which waxes not old, and that faileth not; but improves upon Time, and grows upon Experience. Whereas, if he bring into the ſolitary Hour of Age, a vacant and uninformed Mind, where no Knowledge dawns, where no Ideas riſe, which has nothing to feed upon within itſelf, many a heavy, many a comfortleſs Day he muſt neceſſarily paſs. So different is the State of him who grows-old in Ignorance and Folly, from the Man who grows-old in Knowledge and Wiſdom.

But further, When a Man declines into the Vale of Years, he depends more on the Aid of his Friends, than in any other Period of his Life. Then is the Time, when he would eſpecially wiſh to find himſelf ſurrounded by ſome who love and reſpect him; who will bear with his Infirmities, relieve him in his Labours, and chear him with their Society.

Let him, therefore, now, in the Height and Strength of his Days, while yet active and able, by Acts of ſeaſonable Kindneſs and Beneficence enſure that Love, and by upright and honourable Conduct lay-foundation for that Reſpect, which in Old-age he would wiſh to enjoy. But,

Laſtly, Let him conſider a good Conſcience, Peace with God, and the Hope of Heaven, as the moſt effectual Conſolations he can poſſeſs when "the evil Days ſhall come," wherein, otherwiſe, he is likely to find but little Pleaſure in them.

It is not merely by tranſient Acts of Devotion that ſuch Conſolations are to be obtained. The regular Tenor of a virtuous and pious Life, ſpent in the faithful Diſcharge of all the Duties of our Station, will prove the beſt Preparation for Old-age, for Death, and for Immortality.

Among the Meaſures thus taken for the latter Scenes of Life, we are not to forget to put our worldly Affairs in Order, in due Time. (*) This is a Duty which every Man owes to his Character, to his Family, or to thoſe, whoever they may be, that are to ſucceed him; but withal, a Duty too often unwiſely delayed, from the Averſion we entertain of holding in our Minds any Thoughts of quitting the World. Let him not truſt too much to what he will do in his Old-age. "Suffi-

(*) See Note (*), Vol. xviii, Page 482.

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cient for that Day (if he ſhall live to ſee it) will be the Burden thereof." (*)

It has, indeed, been remarked, (to whatever Cauſe it may be owing,) that, as Men advance in Years they care leſs to think of Death: But, as to die, is the Doom of all, let us take Meaſures betimes for going-off the Stage, when it ſhall be our Turn to withdraw, with Decency and Propriety; leaving nothing unfulfilled which it is expedient to have done before.

To live LONG, ought not to be our favourite Wiſh, ſo much as to live WELL. By continuing too long upon Earth, we might only live to witneſs a greater Number of melancholy Scenes, and to expoſe ourſelves to a wider Compaſs of Woe. He who has ſerved his Generation faithfully in the World, has duly honoured God, and been beneficent and uſeful to Mankind; he who in his Life has been reſpected and beloved; whoſe Death is accompanied with the ſincere Regret of all who knew him, and whoſe Memory is honoured; that Man has ſufficiently fulfilled his Courſe, whether it was appointed by Providence to be long or ſhort. — For, "Honourable Age is not THAT which ſtandeth in Length of Time, nor THAT which is meaſured by Number of Years: but Wiſdom is the Gray-hair to Man; and an unſpotted Life is Old-age."

(*) See Vol. xviii. Page 475, &c.

Sermon

SERMON CCCXCIII.

The Duty of Servants.

Coloſ. iii. 22. "Servants, obey in all things your "Maſters according to the Fleſh: not with Eye-"ſervice, as Men-pleaſers; but in Singleneſs of "Heart, fearing God."

Having conſidered the Duties of Parents and Children, of Youth and Middle-age, we proceed to explain and enforce thoſe of Maſters and Servants. Previous to this it will be neceſſary to inquire into the Origin and Grounds of this Relation. The Diſcuſſion of this Queſtion will throw a Light upon the Subject, and prepare us the better to receive the Apoſtolic Inſtruction now before us.

Here then we ſhall lay down the following Poſitions, which have an evident Connection with, & Dependence on each other – Men, as Men, are equal – Their Condition in Life is various and unequal – They are not ſufficient to their own Support, and therefore ſtand in Need of one another's Aſſiſtance – But effectual Aſſiſtance can only be rendered in a Way that requires

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Authority on the one Part, and Obedience on the other. Authority and Obedience are, however, the Result of voluntary Agreement — And, where these are properly adjusted, there will be a nearly equal Distribution of Happiness.

IIt. Men, as Men, are equal.

What we mean, is, that we all possess one common Nature, and therefore the Rights and Duties of Humanity are common to all. Every Individual, whether a Prince or a Peasant, derives from the same Stock, is composed of the same constituent Parts, is born into the World after the same Manner, is nourished alike by the Produce of the Earth, is alike liable to Death, and in the End reduced alike to Dust and Corruption. We are all formed on one Plan, possessed of the same Faculties and Passions, capable of the same Joys and Sorrows, subject to the same Wants and Casualties, and are all alike amenable at the Tribunal of God, who is no Respector of Persons, but will deal with Men according to their moral and religious Character, and not their external Dignity, Power, or Wealth. "He hath made of one Blood, all Nations of Men, for to dwell on all the Face of the Earth."—To the like Purpose Solomon tells us, "The Rich and Poor meet together: the Lord is the Maker of them all." So Job, when speaking of the humane Treatment his

Servants had met with at his Hands, adds, "Did not He that made me in the Womb, make him? and did not One faſhion us in the Womb?" As if he had ſaid, Maſters & Servants, conſidered as Men, are equal.

It follows, therefore, that the Claims of Mankind upon one another are equal: (i.e) the Law of Nature is univerſal, and equally binding on all. Whatever one Man hath a Right, as a Man, to require of another, that he hath a Right to require of me.

The Obligations of Truth, Juſtice, Compaſſion, Benevolence, and Gratitude, are common to Men of every Rank, thoſe in the moſt exalted, and thoſe in the moſt inferior Stations of Life. For, being all formed on one Scale, and evidently deſigned for ſocial Connections, that which a Man by a Kind of Impulſe of Nature feels himſelf diſpoſed to expect and demand from his Neighbour, he cannot but inſtantly perceive his Neighbour, in the like Circumſtances, is entitled to from him. From this Law, therefore, which ariſes out of a Sameneſs of Nature, no Man is or can be exempted. So that all Men, as ſuch, are equal. But then,

2dly, Their Condition in Life is various.

This is true in Regard of Mind, Body, and Eſtate. Though Men are all endowed with the ſame natural Faculties, yet there is a manifeſt Difference in the Strength, Power, and Extent of them. Some poſſeſs

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a more lively Imagination than others, ſome a more penetrating Judgment, and ſome a more retentive Memory. And the Effect is prodigious in Matters of Science, Buſineſs, and Art. One Man ſhall eaſily comprehend a Point, which another can ſcarce form any Idea about. One ſhall almoſt inſtantly compaſs an Object, which another of ſlow Underſtanding cannot arrive at but by long and tedious Steps. (*)

There is alſo an amazing Variety in the Geniuſes of Mankind, which are evidently adapted to different Purſuits, all which have their Uſe in Society. The Truth of theſe Obſervations, which might be branched out into innumerable Particulars, muſt ſtrike every One who is at all converſant with the World.

The Body too, tho' framed in the general upon the ſame Plan, has a great Variety in its Appearance and Conſtruction. Not to ſpeak of the Senſes, ſome of which are quicker and ſtronger in one Man than another, how do they differ in Size, Strength, Agility, animal Spirits, and the like! Some of robuſt Conſtitutions are equal to the moſt painful Labours, while others of a tender delicate Frame are quickly over-powered with every trifling Exertion. And then,

As to Men's worldly Circumſtances, theſe are as various, if not more ſo, than their Powers of Body and Mind.

(*) See Vol. xix. Page 514. Serm. CCCXCIII.

Mind. Some are rich and others poor. Some poſſeſs large Eſtates, accumulated Wealth, ſplendid Titles, and extenſive Dominion; while others have very little Property, move in contracted Spheres, and paſs their Lives in Obſcurity. And between the two Extremes of great Opulence and wretched Poverty the Degrees are almoſt innumerable. So that the Capacities and Conditions of Mankind, whereby they are fitted for various Departments of Life, are diverſified beyond a Poſſibility of exact Deſcription. The Truth of theſe Facts is not to be diſputed.

Without debating, therefore, whether Subordination be neceſſary to Harmony, I ſhall only aſſert, that Diſtinction of Rank being admitted, the Principle needs no other Proof.

In every Condition Man is neceſſitated to obey a ſuperior Power; this Dependance is more or leſs ſenſible. The Noble who commands a certain Number of Vaſſals, is himſelf ſubordinate to One of higher Rank, who is likewiſe himſelf ſubject to One of greater Degree. This is a Chain, whoſe Links extend quite to the Sovereign, who ſees nothing above him but the Laws and his Duty.

But it will be enquired how this happens? A very proper Queſtion this to be adverted to here, in Order to check the Pride of Superiors on the one Hand, and

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to reconcile Inferiors to their Stations, on the Other. The former are too apt to look on the latter as a Species of Beings below them, and ſo to treat them with Inhumanity and Contempt; and theſe again too apt to conſider the other as poſſeſſing more than their Share, and ſo a fit Prey for Depredation, when Opportunity offers. But it will be found on Reflection, that as Inferiors have the ſame natural Rights with Superiors, and therefore ought to be treated with Humanity; ſo this Inequality of Condition is the Reſult of the wiſe Diſpoſition of divine Providence, (*) and therefore ought to be acquieſced in. Who can doubt that the Powers of Nature, both mental and corporeal, however capable of being improved and enlarged by Culture and Uſe, are the Gifts of God? If therefore he withholds Underſtanding and Sagacity from ſome, and Strength and Agility from others, who ſhall complain, ſince he does no other than he has a Right to do? And ſo as to Wealth, however it is acquired, provided it is gained honeſtly, it is the Fruit of his Munificence. He poſſeſſes Men of the Means of becoming proſperous, and he crowns thoſe Means with Succeſs. Wherefore they who have more Property than others, have a Right to the peaceable Enjoyment of it: and they who have leſs are

(*) See the 39th Sermon in this Work, Vol. iii. Page 218, on the Impartiality of God.

are not authorized, by a Pretence of Want, to make Encroachments on their Neighbours. – As it is God, then, that hath made Men, in Regard of the Rights of Nature, equal; ſo it is He that hath made them, in Regard of Condition, unequal.

3dly, Individuals are not ſufficient to their own Support, and therefore ſtand in Need of one another's Aſſiſtance.

Every One muſt, every One does feel, that he cannot ſubſiſt of himſelf without friendly Support. And of whom are Men, under God, to expect Aid but of their Fellow-creatures, of thoſe with whom they are intimately connected in Society, and who have it in their Power, by poſſeſſing various Capacities, and filling various Stations, to be mutually beneficial to each other? Inferiors require the Aid of Superiors, and naturally look up to them for it; the Ignorant to the Wiſe for Inſtruction, the Weak to the Strong for Support, and the Poor to the Rich for Charity. And it is as true on the other Hand, that Superiors need the Aſſiſtance of their Inferiors. The Rich cannot do without the Poor. Let a Man poſſeſs the largeſt Share of Wealth, it can do him little good, if others are indiſpoſed to help him. He cannot by his own perſonal Exertions procure the Conveniences, if the Neceſſaries of Life: and of what Uſe is Wealth if it will not purchaſe

chaſe the Fruit of other Men's Labours? But this it will do, as Multitudes cannot ſubſiſt without an Exchange of Labour for Property. Hence it is a Maxim among the commercial Part of Mankind, that the induſtrious Poor are the Riches of their Country: for Trade and Manufactures, which are the grand Sources of Wealth, owe their Support to them. Here a great Variety of Inſtances might be mentioned, wherein Perſons of all Ranks and Conditions are mutually benefited by each other's Aſſiſtance. But that which is the Object of this Diſcourſe ſhall ſuffice. Domeſtic Affairs cannot be managed without the Aid of Servants. The Heads of Families therefore will look out for proper Perſons to fill their ſeveral Departments of Service. And thoſe again, whoſe inferior Condition of Life makes it neceſſary to procure Support by miniſtering to thoſe above them, will cheerfully offer their Service for a proportionable Reward.

This being the Caſe, the Wiſdom of divine Providence in endowing Men with ſuch different Capacities, and in diſtributing Property to them in ſuch various Proportions, cannot be enough admired. If the Conditions of all Men were equal, it would be difficult to conceive how the Community could ſubſiſt. It is, however, certain that the aggregate Sum of worldly Happineſs would not, in that Caſe, be ſo conſiderable

as it is. And then it is further to be obſerved, that as this Inequality of Condition qualifies and diſpoſes Men to aſſiſt each other's temporal Intereſts, ſo it is often productive of great Good to them in Regard of their nobler Intereſts. Their Virtues are hereby tried, exerciſed, and improved, ſuch as Humility, Meekneſs, Contentment, and Patience, on the one Hand; and Humanity, Condeſcenſion, Sympathy and Benevolence, on the other. And thus are they enabled the better to ſtruggle with the various and unavoidable Viciſſitudes of the preſent Life, and gradually fitted for the noble permanent Joys of another. – This leads us to obſerve,

4thly, That the Aſſiſtance which Men thus mutually ſtand in need of, can only be rendered in a Way that requires Authority on the one Part, and Obedience on the other.

If the Conditions of Mankind are, as we have ſeen, various; the Aſſiſtance they require of each other muſt be various too. It is the Buſineſs of the Wiſe to inſtruct the ignorant, of the Strong to help the weak, and of the Rich to communicate to the poor. But theſe Offices (under which general Ideas an infinite Number beſides are comprehended) cannot be rendered, unleſs the former are allowed, under certain Reſtrictions, to exerciſe Authority, Command, and Dominion; and the latter are diſpoſed to yield Attention, Submiſſion,

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and Obedience. How can the Maſter, for Inſtance, teach unleſs he has Authority to command the Attention and implicit Regard of the Scholar? How can thoſe of mature Age, and who poſſeſs ſuperior Strength, cheriſh the Young, ſupport the Feeble, and defend the Weak, without the uncontroled Exertion of that Force with which they are endowed to theſe Ends? And how is it to be expected that the Rich, who have an undoubted Right to the Property they hold, ſhould part with a Portion of it to the Poor, if theſe are not diſpoſed to make a proportionable Return of Service, or at leaſt an humble and grateful Acknowledgment of the Obligations they hereby incur? Diſmiſs all Idea of Pre-eminence, Authority, Command, and Government; and of their Oppoſites, Docility, Submiſſion, Obedience and Servitude; and there will be an End to the Intercourſes of Society: Men muſt in that Caſe ſubſiſt, if ſubſiſt at all, in a cold, lonely, perilous, unhappy Condition. — But then,

5thly, Authority and Obedience are the Reſult of voluntary Compact.

Men's Wants naturally lead them into ſocial Connections, which make Rule and Order neceſſary; but they are born free. Every Man has a Right to diſpoſe of himſelf in Reſpect of all the Concerns of Life, as he pleaſes, provided he does not injure his Neighbour.

Nor can any One juſtly demand Service of another againſt his Conſent. The Caſe is indeed otherwiſe with Children, Idiots, and Lunatics: they are not *ſui Juris*, and therefore it is an Act of Humanity and Juſtice to exerciſe compulſory Authority over them. But Men poſſeſſed of their Reaſon are free. Freedom however is ſubject to certain Reſtrictions; which Reſtrictions, as they are the Reſult of either tacit or expreſs Agreement, do not injure but improve and confirm it. When Men enter into Society they agree to veſt in Perſons choſen for that Purpoſe, the Power of defending them againſt foreign Enemies, and finally to determine Diſputes among themſelves. So they part with a certain Portion of their natural Rights to others, in Order to ſecure to themſelves a Good to which they are not in their individual Capacity competent. And thus Government, which becomes neceſſary in Conſequence of human Imperfection and Depravity, riſes into Exiſtence. Now every One born in Society tacitly acknowledges, by accepting the Protection and Benefit of Government, his voluntary Submiſſion to it. And ſo he is bound; but in no Way, we ſee, prejudicial to his natural Rights. When, however, he violates the juſt Laws of Society to which he has thus conſented, he forfeits his Freedom. But fulfilling his Agreement, he is in all other Reſpects as free as in a State of Nature.

Whether

Whether a foreign Enemy, becoming a Conqueror, may juſtly demand Servitude of the vanquiſhed, is a Queſtion we ſhall not here particularly conſider. We muſt however juſt obſerve, that in many Inſtances the Cauſe of the Conqueror is itſelf unjuſt, and of Conſequence his Demands oppreſſive; and in moſt Caſes the lower People are not at all acceſſary to the Diſpute, and ſo do not deſerve to be deprived of their Liberty.

But it is of the Right of Maſters and Servants in a domeſtic Capacity that we are now ſpeaking. And theſe are, no Doubt, the Reſult of voluntary Compact or Agreement. No Man has a Right, becauſe he poſſeſſes more than his Neighbour, to compel him to become his Servant. Nor has another a Right, becauſe of his Poverty, to force his Service on the Rich. Indeed, upon the general Grounds of Humanity, the former is an Object of the charitable Regard of the latter, and having received his Bounty he ought to be thankful. But Authority and Obedience take-place in Conſequence of a direct and poſitive Contract. The Maſter ſtipulates with the Servant, for ſuch and ſuch Services to pay him ſuch and ſuch Wages; and the Servant ſtipulates with the Maſter, for ſuch and ſuch Wages to render him ſuch and ſuch Services. And ſo the Maſter has a juſt Right to exerciſe Authority over the Servant, and the Servant is obliged to yield Obedience

to the Maſter. And indeed not only Juſtice requires that there ſhould be ſuch Agreement between the two Parties, but Intereſt alſo. For if there be not Good-will on both Sides, neither the One nor the Other are likely to be benefited by this important Connection. Which leads me to ſhew,

Laſtly, That where theſe Matters are properly adjuſted, there will be a nearly equal Diſtribution of Happineſs.

The Welfare of Individuals is, or ought to be, the Object of all civil and domeſtic Arrangements. The aggrandizing One to the Degradation of another, for the Purpoſe of gratifying Avarice and Ambition, is unjuſt and inhuman. Why ſhould One be an abſolute Deſpot, and another an abject Slave? Nature revolts at the Idea. Every One has a Right to as much Happineſs as his Character, Abilities, and Station of Life are capable of procuring him. And if in this Relation between Maſters and Servants, the Contract is founded in Equity and good Faith, and there is a hearty Good-will on both Sides, it is ſcarce poſſible that either Party ſhould miſs of the End propoſed. There will be mutual Concord, Peace and Contentment. And indeed Regard, cultivated by the mild and humane Uſe of Authority on the one Hand, and by an attentive cheerful Obedience on the other, will almoſt generally, in a

Courſe

Courſe of Time, ripen into a cordial and laſting Friendſhip and Affection.

And from hence it follows that there is, or at leaſt, if the Voice of Reaſon were duly regarded, there would be, a more equal Partition of Happineſs among Mankind than is commonly apprehended. Through the miſtaken Eſtimates which Men have formed of ſuperior and inferior Stations of Life, and through the miſerable Abuſe of the Rights and Duties of theſe Relations, too many have come to conceive of Authority and Dominion, as the real and only Sources of Happineſs; and of Servitude and Obedience, as neceſſarily ſubjecting Men to Contempt and Wretchedneſs. But if the Light in which we have placed the Matter is juſt, a ſenſible and ſober Man would be almoſt at a Loſs to determine which Station, upon the whole, is moſt eligible – So equally has a wiſe and good Providence diſtributed Happineſs among Mankind! – If more bodily Pain and Labour falls to the Share of the Servant than the Maſter, the Servant has however leſs Care and Anxiety to diſturb his Peace. He has no weighty Concern to exerciſe his Sagacity, Attention, and Patience. Having done his Duty, and by honeſt Labour contributed to his own Health, he may eat his Bread with a peculiar Reliſh, enjoy his Reſt without Interruption, and have the Comfort too of hoping that he has attach-

ed the Affections of his Maſter to himſelf, and may reap ſome extraordinary Advantages from thence in Time to come. Let no one therefore be offended at the Idea of Authority, as if it monopolized the Sum total of human Happineſs; nor at Servitude, as if it ſunk Men beneath the Species into a Condition of Wretchedneſs and Contempt.

Thus we ſee – Men, as Men, are equal – Their Condition in Life is unequal – They are not ſufficient to their own Support, and therefore ſtand in Need of each other's Aſſiſtance – But effectual Aſſiſtance can only be rendered by the due Exerciſe of Authority on the one Part, and Obedience on the other – Authority and Obedience are, however, the Reſult of voluntary Agreement – And, where theſe are properly adjuſted, there will be a nearly equal Diſtribution of Happineſs.

Such are the Grounds of the Relation between Maſters and Servants, and of the Obligations they owe to each other. And it is upon theſe Principles the Admonitions to the latter in the Text, and to the former in the following Chapter, are founded. But,

Before we proceed to explain the Apoſtolic Exhortation to Servants, and go on to a more particular Conſideration of the ſeveral Duties of this Character, and the Motives to urge Men to the due Practice of them; it will be neceſſary to ſubjoin two or three Remarks,

which

which the perfect Agreement there is between the Dictates of Nature and the Language of the Text and Context ſuggeſts. — The firſt is, that they very injuriouſly miſrepreſent the Chriſtian Inſtitution who inſinuate, that it countenances a levelling Principle in Society. Nothing can be clearer than that it every where recommends Decency, Regularity, and Subordination among Mankind. This is the plain Language of the Text and the Chapter following it, in Regard of domeſtic Arrangements. The Diſtinction of Maſters and Servants is not confounded, but on the contrary marked with the greateſt Preciſion. The latter, whatever real Dignity their Chriſtian Character may confer on them, are required to behave towards the former, tho Infidels, in the moſt reſpectful Manner, remembering the different Ranks they hold in the Community. "Let as many Servants, as are under the Yoke, count their own Maſters" (i.e. Maſters who were Unbelievers, as the Context plainly ſhews) "worthy of all Honour; that the Name of God and his Doctrine, be not blaſphemed." And again, "Servants be ſubject to your Maſters with all Fear, not only to the good and gentle, but alſo to the froward." They are alſo cautioned againſt treating their Maſters, becauſe Fellow-Chriſtians, with indecent Freedom. "They that have believing Maſters, let them not deſpiſe them, becauſe

they are Brethren; but rather do them Service becauſe they are faithful and beloved, Partakers of the Benefit."

This levelling Principle, then, which ſome have palmed upon the Chriſtian Inſtitution, is totally without Foundation. It is a Fact, that Men hold different Ranks and Stations in Life: It is the Will of Providence that it ſhould be ſo, in Order to anſwer Purpoſes of Utility and Importance to themſelves and Society: and agreeably to this wiſe Arrangement of things, and without any Cenſure on them, they are addreſſed in, and throughout the ſacred Volume.

It is further to be remarked, that as the New Teſtament aſſerts the Rights of Superiors, ſo it is alike attentive to the Claims of Inferiors. It does not court the Regards of the Rich and Mighty, to the Injury or Neglect of the poor and helpleſs. It teaches that Men, as Men, are equal; that they are all ſubject to the ſame Laws, and are all alike amenable at the Tribunal of the God of Heaven, who is no Reſpector of Perſons. And it not only warns thoſe of exalted Stations againſt Acts of Injuſtice and Oppreſſion, but earneſtly perſuades them to thoſe of Condeſcenſion, Humanity, and Benevolence. This is the general Tenor of the Bible: and it is enough to refer you to the Text, wherein we have the Cauſe of the Servant is pleaded with the ſame impartial Regards as that of the Maſter.

From

From this View, then, of the Morality of the Scriptures we derive a preſumptive Proof of their Truth. And that Proof is conſiderably augmented, when we reflect that the Duties of Morality are not only here happily explained and ſtrictly enjoined, but that they have here a further and nobler Support than the Law of Nature can afford them. What we mean, is, that the Goſpel is ſo conſtructed as at once to throw Light upon our Duty, and to poſſeſs us of new and extraordinary Motives to perſuade us to a Compliance with it. — To apply this Idea to the Matter before us.

The reciprocal Duties of Maſters and Servants muſt be acknowledged, when examined only by the Light of Nature, to be right, fit, and mutually beneficial. But the Chriſtian Scheme, when properly underſtood, enables us more clearly to apprehend than we otherwiſe could, the ſubſtantial Difference between Right and Wrong; and by the noble Temper it inſpires powerfully animates us to the Duties of Fidelity, Submiſſion, and Obedience, on the one Hand, and of Condeſcenſion, Gentleneſs, and Love on the other. And ſo it is of infinite Uſe in explaining and enforcing the mutual Obligations of Maſters and Servants. This is an Obſervation we may have an Opportunity more fully to conſider and illuſtrate hereafter. And, if it be

found to be true, it will have no ſmall Weight, in Concurrence with the external Evidence of the Goſpel, to prove the Chriſtian Inſtitution divine.

Sermon

SERMON CCCXCIV.

On the same Subject.
The Nature of it, and Obligations to it.

Coloſ. iii. 22. "Servants, obey in all things your "Maſters according to the Fleſh: not with Eye-"ſervice, as Men-pleaſers; but in Singleneſs of "Heart, fearing God."

When the New-Teſtament was written, the Generality of Servants were, as in many Places they are ſtill, mere Slaves, and the Perſons to whom they belonged had a Right to their Labour, and to that of their Poſterity, forever, without giving them any other Wages than their Maintenance; and with a Power to inflict on them what Puniſhment they pleaſed, for the moſt Part; even Death itſelf, if they would. — The Inſolence and Cruelty of inhuman Maſters, thus exerciſed, made the Condition of Servants a State of unſpeakable Miſery for many Generations; and the natural Conſequence from ſuch ill Treatment & Inhumanity in the Maſters, was an Idleneſs and Neglect on the Side of the Servants, and an utter Diſregard of their Maſter's Intereſt, when-

whenever it was consistent with their own Safety; together with secret Resolutions of Revenge, upon the first Opportunity. And hence it is, that in all the ancient Comedies, which are the truest Representations of Life, the Business of the Slave is, always to corrupt the Son, and defraud the Master: that is, to injure him in his two nearest Concerns: not without Violence to his Person, whenever he can find any Pretence for a Disguise to execute his Vengeance with Impunity.

In this Condition Christianity found the World; and as it is the Business of that excellent Institution to correct the Errors of Mankind, and improve their Manners; to banish Violence and Villany, and introduce Peace and Good-will in their Stead; the World has been gradually humanized and improved by it, as in every other Instance, so likewise in this of Dominion and Servitude. That excellent Religion which teaches us, that Humility, and Mercy, and Love are the distinguishing Badges of our Christian Profession, could not fail to teach us the Duty of treating our Fellow-creatures with Gentleness and Humanity, and inspire us with an utter Abhorrence of that Cruelty to our Christian Brethren, which would ill become us to the Beasts that perish; nay, and would be criminal even there. And hence it came to pass, that the Laws of perpetual Servitude, and the Power of Life and Limbs,

were

were gradually relaxed and taken away; and Mankind restored to their native and original Freedom, and Social Rights. And although many of them cannot yet (as we have seen,*) subsist out of a State of Servitude, yet are they under no Necessity of continuing in it longer than they themselves have consented to: so that, if they cannot live in absolute Freedom, they have at least what is next to it; for to have it in our Power to change our Masters after a determined Time, and cease to serve whenever the Condition of our Affairs will allow us, is in the Next Degree to Liberty itself. In the mean Time, the Lives and Limbs of Servants are as well secured to them, at least in this Part of the World, as their Master's to them; and to deprive them of either is, in the Eye of the Law, equally criminal. But then, on the other Hand, that Masters should not be put in a worse Condition, by the Diminution of their Powers and Prerogatives over their Servants, the Christian Religion hath now bound all that Duty and Fidelity upon the Consciences of Servants, which before were only the Effects of Restraint and Fear. Hence it is, that St. Paul, in the Words before us, enjoins Servants to pay all Kind of Observance to their Masters, from the Motives of a good Conscience, and a Sense of Duty towards God; assuring them, that an honest Discharge of

(*) In the preceding Discourse, Serm. CCCXCIV.

of their Duty in this Point is highly acceptable in the Sight of God, and will moſt infallibly have its Reward.

"Servants, obey in all things your Maſters according to the Fleſh: not with Eye-ſervice, as Men-pleaſers; but in Singleneſs of Heart, fearing God."

The Duties of Servants, in Regard both of the Matter and the Manner of them, are all comprehended in the general Idea of Obedience. We propoſe, therefore, to conſider,

Firſt, The Service itſelf, and the Obligations to it.

Secondly, The Manner in which it is to be rendered, and the Motives inducing to it. And,

Firſt, Let us conſider the Duty itſelf that is required of Servants, and their Obligations in general to it.

The Name SERVANT, by which they are deſcribed, is expreſſive of the Help or Aſſiſtance they are to render their Maſters. They are to wait upon them, to miniſter to them, to ſupport and defend them. But the Kinds of Service required of them are ſo diverſified that we cannot, nor indeed is it to our Purpoſe particularly to enumerate them. In large Families there are various Departments of Service, and in ſmaller the whole Buſineſs of the Houſe falls perhaps upon one or a few only. It is however here to be obſerved, that whatever Rank the Servant holds in the Family, the general Intereſt of the Maſter is to be his Object.

Now

Now the Service due from Perſons in this Relation, is of a different Denomination from that which Men who are in the ſame Line of Life owe to one another. It is to be conſidered as the Reſult of that Authority which their Maſters have over them, and is therefore properly deſcribed by the Term OBEDIENCE. It is the Maſter's Province to command, the Servants to obey. And the Obedience is to be univerſal. "Servants," ſays the Apoſtle, "obey your Maſters in ALL things." — The Service amongſt us is a much happier State than it was before the Days of Chriſtianity, the Conditions of it being uſually no other than what the Servants themſelves enter into, for their own Benefit; yet, as Chriſtianity explains the Duties of Servants more fully, and enforces them more ſtrongly, they are therefore not to think themſelves exempt herein, but ſhould perform whatever is due from them both more conſcientiouſly, and more carefully, "pleaſing their Maſters well, in all things." (*)

Not that by the Obedience here expreſſed, how unlimited ſoever it may appear, we are to underſtand that a Servant is obliged always to conform to the Will and Direction of his Maſter, however unjuſt or unreaſonable. This Requiſition, therefore, is to be underſtood

(*) Solomon hath wiſely obſerved that "If a Servant ſay to his Maſter, I will not do as it pleaſeth thee: tho afterwards he do it, he angereth him that nouriſheth him." Serm. CCCXCIV.

ſtood with certain Limitations. Theſe we ſhall now mention, and all thoſe Commands which fall not within theſe Reſtrictions, are to be punctually and unreſervedly complied with. There are three Caſes wherein a Servant may be juſtified in refuſing Obedience to his Maſter's Commands.

1ſt. When the Maſter's Commands are contrary to the Commands of God or the Community. The Reaſon is evident; becauſe Mankind are under prior Obligations to God and Society, and therefore all other Engagements muſt yield to theſe; and whenever they happen to be inconſiſtent with them, they immediately ceaſe, and become null and void. The Authority of God is infinitely ſuperior to that of Man. He is our Maſter in a more abſolute Senſe than any one elſe can poſſibly be. When therefore the Will of any Superior claſhes with his Will, it is on no Account to be liſtened to, or complied with. For Inſtance, If a Maſter ſhould command a Servant to ſpeak an Untruth, or ſwear, to defame, or defraud, to be an Accomplice with him in any fraudulent Action, to break the Sabbath, or to profane divine Inſtitutions, or commit any Vice or Villany whatſoever, there he is abſolutely to diſobey him; becauſe God hath commanded him not to do any of theſe things; and the Apoſtles have taught us to "obey God rather than Man."

In

In these Cases the partial Obligation by which he is connected, doth by no Means bind him to the Performance of it; – the last Contract we make, will not annul that which was prior to it; – the Relations which we bear to each other, were ordained to strengthen, not to dissolve the powerful Ties of Justice and Morality.

In all Cases, therefore, where the Servant's Obedience interferes with Divine or Human Laws, it is not required. "God is to be obeyed rather than Man." (*).

Obedience in any such Cases would bring Guilt on his Conscience, and subject him to infinitely greater Evils than he could possibly suffer from the Resentments of an earthly Master, however powerful he may be. And, as Servants are reasonable Creatures, and accountable to God for their Conduct, so they are to judge for themselves of the Lawfulness or Unlawfulness of any Command they receive from their Superiors. But then they are to look well to it, that they do not, under Pretence of Conscience, but really from Motives of Sloth and Self-gratification, with-hold Obedience to their Master's just Commands. For in such Case they contract double Guilt, that of violating their Duty to Man, and to God also. — But even here Servants must excuse themselves decently, though resolutely.

2dly,

(*) See this Case stated in the Duty of Children to their Parents, Vol. six. Page 327, &c. as equally applicable between Masters and Servants.

2dly, Servants are juſtified in diſobeying their Maſter's Commands, when they are required to do what is not within their Power.

Such unreaſonable Maſters as theſe there have been: ſuch was Pharaoh, who demanded Bricks of the Iſraelites, while he withheld from them the neceſſary Materials for making them. But in theſe Caſes there can be nothing criminal in Diſobedience, becauſe the contrary is impoſſible. Nor is there any Criminality in Men's not attempting what they are not competent to. But then it too often ſo happens that Servants, through a ſlothful Diſpoſition, do not exert themſelves as they might; and ſo pretend Incapacity when the Fault is not in their Ability, but their Will. This is a very great Evil, and the Complaints of ſuch Servants, as if their Maſter's Commands were rigorous, and therefore ought to be diſobeyed, are groundleſs. Maſters, however, ſhould be cautious that they do not impoſe unreaſonable Burdens on their Servants; always bearing in Mind the golden Rule, "of doing, as they would be done unto." —— There is one more Inſtance which will juſtify the not complying with a Maſter's Commands; and that is,

3dly, When ſuch Service is demanded as falls not within the Compaſs of the Servant's Agreement.

There are various Departments of Service, as we have

have obſerved, in ſome Families: and when Servants engage to do the Buſineſs of one of them, excluſively of all other Buſineſs, and receive Wages for ſuch Duty only, it is unreaſonable, and a Breach of Covenant, to force them beyond that Line. Wherefore, Non-compliance on their Part is not to be conſtrued into Diſobedience. (*) But whatever they engaged, or knew they were expected to do; or what, tho they did not know it beforehand, is uſual and reaſonable, or even not very unreaſonable, they muſt ſubmit to. For, if Servants may, on every ſmall Pretence, refuſe to do This, and queſtion whether that belongs to their Place, it is moſt evident, that Authority and Order in Families muſt be at an End; and they themſelves will have much more Trouble in diſputing about their Buſineſs, than they would have in performing it. (‡) Ge-

(*) All Servants are not alike obliged to obey their Maſters in *all Things*, tho innocent and lawful, or indifferent; becauſe that all are not alike Servants. The State of Servitude is very different in one Country, from what it is in another; and in the ſame Country it is differenced by the Variety of Contracts and Agreements. The Duty and Obedience of Servants, therefore, is to be meaſured by thoſe Contracts, and the Situations they are placed, or have placed themſelves in.

(‡) Whatever is commanded by the Maſter, that is conſonant with Reaſon and Juſtice, is to be obeyed by the Servant with the utmoſt Exactneſs. The Will of the Maſter is not, in Matters indifferent, to be controverted or diſputed: the Mind, as well as the

General Good-will, which Servants owe to their Maſters, and to one another, ſhould diſpoſe them on particular Occaſions to go beyond their own proper Province in a Family, in Order to be helpful to the Whole. And as in moſt Caſes ſuch occaſional Aſſiſtance is ſuppoſed to come within the Compaſs of their original Agreement, an obſtinate Refuſal is an Argument of Want of Temper, if it may not be deemed downright Diſobedience.

Servants, therefore, ſhould obey, and that too, reſpectfully and readily; not murmuring, as if their Work were not due for their Wages; (*) but, as the Apoſtle exhorts, "with Good-will, doing Service;" not anſwering again, as if thoſe, whom they ſerve, were their Equals; but paying all fit Honour to their Maſters. (‡)

But

Body, ſhould be pliant and flexible. Opinions, therefore, if advanced at all, are to be tendered with Humility; and Doubts, if propoſed at all, are to be propoſed with Reverence and Submiſſion.

Indigna, digna habenda ſunt, quæ Herus facit.
Sub Magiſtro haud pœnitendo.
Exitus hic nobis non inhonеſtus erit.
Non ſatis eſt Artis ſolis Coquo, ſervire Palato;
Namque Cocus Domini debet habere Gulam.

(*) *Muſſat, muſſitat. Labra movet tacitus, mutuus audiri.*
There ought to be in Servants a double Silence; the One, in not replying or anſwering again; the Other, in not revealing abroad the Matters done at Home.

(‡) It is impoſſible that That Servant, who thinketh himſelf wiſer

or

But further, — Servants are to ſuffer patiently the Reproofs and Corrections of their Maſters "without anſwering again, or murmuring. A quiet ſilent Submiſſion is required, even when the Servant hath given no juſt Cauſe for being rebuked, but that it proceeds from the unprovoked Rage and Paſſion of a Maſter. The Apoſtle's Command is, "Servants be ſubject to your own Maſters with all Fear, not only to the good and gentle, but alſo to the froward; if a Man for Conſcience towards God, ſuffers wrongfully, and takes it patiently, this is praiſe-worthy, and acceptable to God. But if, when we are buffeted for our Faults we take it patiently, what Room for Glory in this?" Indeed, of all things belonging to the Duty of a Servant, this is the moſt difficult, and nothing can ſweeten and make it tolerable but a Senſe of Duty, and the Expectation of a Reward from God. (*)

The Inſtances of Non-compliance with a Maſter's Commands being admitted as lawful, all his other Commands are no Doubt to be punctually obeyed. "Servants, obey your Maſters in all things." A Maſter's Com-

any Way better than his Maſter, can be truly ſaid to reverence him in his Heart. St. Paul, therefore, would have "Servants count their Maſters worthy of all Honour."

(*) Should the Commands of Maſters be impertinent, imperious, or tyrannical, yet Servants are no more exempted from Obedience, than the Maſters will be from Puniſhment, for requiring unreaſonable things. Serm. CCCXCIV.

Commands are to be obeyed in every Inſtance, whether they reſpect Matters of Moment, or thoſe only of an indifferent and trifling Nature. Diſobedience, indeed, in the former Caſe may be more eſſentially injurious to his Intereſts than in the latter, and the Guilt of the Servant be thereby aggravated. But a Failure of Duty in the ſmalleſt Inſtance, when it proceeds from Contempt of his Authority, is alike criminal. Nor is Difference of Opinion, whether right or wrong, or Diſinclination to the Buſineſs, let it proceed from what Cauſe it will, to over-rule the deciſive Commands of a Maſter, provided, as we have obſerved, they are lawful. A Servant may very properly ſpeak his Mind upon any Matter, ſo he does it reſpectfully: but he is to remember that his Maſter's Judgment is to determine, though it be contrary to his own, and there be no Reaſon aſſigned for it. And however a Deſire for Eaſe may ſometimes put him on excuſing himſelf of a Service that is painful and laborious, yet, when poſitively required, a Senſe of Duty ſhould get the better of Sloth and Self-indulgence. And thus the Will of the Maſter is to be the governing Rule of the Servant's Conduct in every Inſtance that does not come within the Reſtrictions we have mentioned: for, it is not, (as the Apoſtle informs us) a mere external Obedience, which will acquit us; "Servants are to obey their Maſters, not with Eye-ſervice, as Men-pleaſers; but with Singleneſs of Heart, fearing God." Ser-

Servants are to obey their Maſters "in all things;" that is, in all things that are within the Compaſs of their Ability, and not to affect Conſcience towards God, eſpecially in thoſe Matters that belong to their particular Province, and which by their original Contract they bound themſelves to attend to. And this they are to render, "not with Eye-ſervice, as Men-pleaſers," (*) attending to their Buſineſs only while their Maſter's Eye is upon them, thinking to ſecure their Regards by an Appearance of Induſtry, tho they are in Fact careleſs and indolent: but "in Singleneſs of Heart," that is, with Simplicity, Sincerity, and Uprightneſs; in Oppoſition to Guile, Duplicity and Cunning, "in the Fear of God," aiming ſincerely to approve themſelves to Him, whoſe Eye is conſtantly upon them, and who cannot be deceived, tho their Maſter's may.

We proceed now to conſider the Obligations which Servants are under to obey as already deſcribed.

1ſt. It is fit and right that Servants ſhould obey their Maſters in all things.

The Relation between Maſters & Servants is founded (as we have ſeen †) on Principles of Equity and mutual Convenience. The

(*) It hath been obſerved here by ſome critical Expoſitors, that as the original Words the Apoſtle uſes, Ὀφθαλμοδουλίαις and Ἀνθρωπάρεσκοι. are compound Words, ſo our Tranſlators have happily imitated the Original by the Uſe of compound Words alſo.

(†) In the preceding Diſcourſe. Serm. CCCXCIV.

The Reaſoning, in ſhort, is this. Men, as Men, are equal: but their Condition in Life is various and unequal. Not being able to ſubſiſt of themſelves, they need one another's Aſſiſtance. But effectual Aſſiſtance cannot be rendered by Inferiors to their Superiors, if the latter have not a Right to command, and the former are not obliged to obey: for how can a Perſon be ſerved to his Satisfaction, if he may not direct in what Manner he will be ſerved? And how can he be ſure of receiving any Service at all, if he has not Authority to require it? Wherefore the Servant agrees, for a valuable Conſideration, to ſubmit himſelf to the Will of his Maſter. And thus the Relation clearly appears to be founded on Principles of Equity and mutual Convenience. Now,

When the Servant refuſes Obedience to the Maſter, the End propoſed by the Character he ſuſtains is defeated, his own poſitive Engagements are violated, and the Relation itſelf is diſſolved. Wherefore it is fit and right that Servants ſhould obey their Maſters. And the Reaſoning extends to UNIVERSAL Obedience.

For if a Servant is at Liberty to determine for himſelf, juſt as his own Fancy or Humour may direct, in what Inſtances he will or will not obey, how can the Maſter be aſſured that he ſhall be obeyed at all? If his Authority does not reach every Caſe within the Limits already

already mentioned, it is no Authority at all. — The Precept, therefore, is moſt fit and right. "Servants, obey your Maſters in all things," that is, in all things which God your ſuperior Maſter has not forbidden, which are within your Power, and which are included in your Covenant with them when you became their Servants.

2dly, This, too, is the expreſs Command of God. Indeed, whatever is fit and right in itſelf is unqueſtionably the Will of God. Wherefore as the Duty before us has been proved to be fit and right in itſelf, it cannot be doubted that it is the Will of God. But the Scriptures expreſsly declare that it is his Will: and, as the divine Authority will always have a commanding Influence on every ſerious Mind, it will be of Uſe to take a general View of what the Scripture ſays upon this Matter.

Here it is to be remarked, that the Obligation of Servants to obey their Maſters is often ſpoken of as a generally acknowledged Principle: a Mode this of holding-up our Duty to our View the ſtrongeſt, perhaps, and moſt natural that could be uſed.

To this Manner the Pſalmiſt refers to it, when, ſpeaking of the earneſt Attention which good Men pay to the great and ever-bleſſed God, he ſays, "As the Eyes of Servants look unto the Hand of their Maſters, and

as the Eyes of a Maiden unto the Hand of her Miſtreſs; ſo our Eyes wait upon the Lord our God." And the Apoſtle, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourſelves Servants to obey, his Servants ye are to whom ye obey?" So Job, taking this as a Principle granted, ſpeaks of the Diſobedience of his Servants as one of the many grievous Calamities he ſuffered: "I called my Servant and he gave no Anſwer: I entreated him with my Mouth." As if he had ſaid, 'that Duty which all Men agree is fit and reaſonable, is unnaturally and cruelly denied to me.' So our Lord repreſents the Unfaithfulneſs and Ingratitude of the Traitor Judas, "he that eateth Bread with me, hath lift up his Heel againſt me:" and ſpeaks of it as a Truth of unqueſtionable Authority, that "that Servant who knows his Lord's Will, and does not conform to it, is deſerving of Puniſhment." And in another Place, having deſcribed the Servant as making ready his Maſter's Supper, and girding himſelf, and ſerving him, he puts this Queſtion as what no One would be at a Loſs how to anſwer, "Doth he thank that Servant becauſe he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not."

Further, The Obligations lying upon Servants to obey their Maſters, is the Principle ſuppoſed when that Character is applied to Men in Regard of God. Moſes was the Servant of God, and the Apoſtles the Ser-

vants

vants of Christ. And, Who can view them in this Character, without instantly affixing the Idea of a Disposition to conform in all things to the Will of their Masters, whether in Heaven, or here upon Earth?

But this Duty is directly and positively enjoined upon Servants. Not to speak of Instances, such as Hagar's being commanded to submit herself to her Mistress Sarah, and many of the like Nature; we all know how frequently Obedience is urged by Moses on the Israelites, and by the Apostles on Christian Servants. Particular Attention is paid to this Matter in the Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, Timothy, and Titus, and in the general Epistle of Peter.

It is then the express Command of God to Servants, that they obey their Masters in all things. And as you cannot doubt that he is your Master, and has an uncontroled Authority over you, so you are to remember, that the refusing Obedience to them is an act of manifest Disobedience to him. — But,

3dly, Your Duty in this Matter is your Interest. The Happiness of Families, and the Welfare of the Community at large, depend much upon the proper Demeanour of Servants. Wherefore those of them who have Liberality enough to be concerned for the general Good, must surely feel a Pleasure in contributing to it, by acquitting themselves aright in this impor-

tant Station. And if they have an Affection, as they certainly ought to have, for the Families they ſerve, the Idea of being the Inſtruments of making them happy muſt afford them no ſmall Satisfaction. But an unreſerved Obedience to the Will of their Maſters has a direct Influence on their Happineſs. Service thus rendered will be more eaſy to themſelves, than that which is clogged with a miſtaken and perverſe Notion, that their Opinion and Will are ſometimes to over-rule thoſe of their Superiors. Where ſuch an unnatural Competition ariſes, the Buſineſs muſt go on heavily; and the Event will quickly be, what indeed it ought to be, the Diſſolution of the Connection. On the contrary, A Senſe of Duty, in that univerſal Idea of it we have already recommended, will ſoon ripen into an earneſt Deſire to pleaſe. This will facilitate Labours otherwiſe irkſome; and an Obedience thus yielded will not fail to ſecure the affectionate Regards of ingenuous Maſters, and to draw after them, in a Courſe of Time, other Advantages beſides thoſe ſtipulated in the original Agreement. — How happily have ſome Servants lived, whoſe Conduct has been uniformly regulated by this Principle! and how comfortably have they been provided for in the Cloſe of their Days! They merit the Denomination of "wiſe Servants;" and Solomon tells us, "A wiſe Servant ſhall have Rule over a Son that

that causeth Shame; and shall have Part of the Inheritance among the Brethren." It is their Interest, then, in Regard of temporal Matters, to obey their Masters in all things.

But their superiour Interests more loudly demand such a Conduct at their Hands. Would they escape the painful Reflections which a Consciousness of their having wilfully neglected their Duty occasions? And would they enjoy the heart-felt Pleasure of having not only aimed to please their Masters on Earth, but their great Master in Heaven? let them readily fall in with the Admonition in the Text.

It is possible they may not, in many Instances, receive such a Compensation for their Obedience from Men as they deserve. But God will not be unmindful of them. The Apostle particularly assures them of this. Having obeyed their Master in all things, and upon right Principles regarded the Will of God therein, he promises them, that "of the Lord they shall receive the Reward of the Inheritance." He will hereafter raise them from the Rank of Servants on Earth to that of Masters and Princes, and Fellow-citizens in Heaven; for "such Honour have all his Saints." — To which, may be added, as a further Motive to such Obedience,

Thirdly, The Credit of it to our holy Religion. This is an Argument addressed to the ingenuous

Feelings of Servants, as the Disciples of Christ. And a powerful Argument it is! His Admonitions to Servants the Apostle styles "wholesome Words, even the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and agreeable to the Doctrine which is according to Godliness: and those who consent not to them" he represents as "proud, ignorant, and foolish." If Christian Servants fail in their Duty to their Masters, he reminds them that hereby "the Name of God and his Doctrine would be blasphemed." And on the contrary he declares, that by discharging their Duty properly they would "adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour." Nothing can be clearer from hence, than that an Attempt to destroy all civil Distinction in Society, and to bring Superiors and Inferiors on a Level, is a direct Violation of the Commands of God's Word. And nothing can be more evident from these Passages, than that the Genius of the Christian Doctrine and Institution is favourable to that Obedience which we are inculcating upon Servants.

Here then, the Example which Christ has set us in all that humble Obedience, which, as a Man, he yielded unto God; the great and effectual Services he rendered us by his Humiliation and Death; and the Authority he justly claims over us as our Master; all these Considerations might be held up to the View of

Servants

Servants to conciliate their Minds to that Station Providence has allotted them, and to animate them to that Obedience to their Masters which has been shewn to be in itself fit and reasonable. Are you indebted to the painful Labours and agonizing Sufferings of Christ, who became the Servant of God and Man for your Sakes; are you indebted to them for all the substantial Comforts you enjoy here, and the noble Prospects you have hereafter? Do your Breasts flow with Love and Gratitude to him, your divine Benefactor? And have you solemnly vowed Obedience to him as your Master? How then can you wilfully fail in the Duty he authoritatively requires of you! and especially as such a Failure may prove an Occasion of "the Name of God and of his Doctrine's being blasphemed!"

SERMON CCCXCV.

On the same Subject.
Manner of it, and Motives to it.

Colos. iii. 22. "Servants, obey in all things your "Masters according to the Flesh: not with Eye-"service, as Men-pleasers; but in Singleness of "Heart, fearing God."

In the natural Course of human Affairs it must necessarily happen, that some of Mankind will live in Plenty and Opulence, and others be reduced to a State of Indigence and Poverty. The former (as we have seen) needs the Labours of the latter, and the latter the Provision and Support of the former. This mutual Necessity is the Foundation of that Connexion, whether we call it MORAL or CIVIL, which subsists between Masters and Servants. He that feeds another has a Right to some Equivalent, the Labour of him whom he maintains, and the Fruits of it; and, he who labours for another, has a Right to Support and Subsistence.

This Difference and Distinction doth not, in the least, impeach the Rectitude of the Divine Conduct; neither have we the least Right to complain of Partiality

or

or Injuſtice; ſince the higheſt and moſt exalted Stations are attended with numberleſs Pains and Inconveniences; and the loweſt is not without its Share of Comfort and Satisfaction — The Advantages of Maintenance, Support & Protection, from an indulgent Maſter, with many other Advantages ſufficiently obvious, being frequently an Over-balance for the Splendor of Riches, and the dazzling Luſtre of Independence.

But, ſince to complain in this Caſe (on the one Hand) is as abſurd, as it is unjuſt, it being the Appointment of God, and therefore the Duty of all, in Patience and Reſignation, to ſubmit to it; and becauſe (on the other) innumerable Evils ariſe to Society, from the Careleſsneſs and Extravagance, from the Sloth and Negligence of Servants, we cannot (I preſume) better employ our Time, than in conſidering, if our Lot has caſt us into the humble Vale of Life, how we may beſt behave ourſelves in it, perform the Taſk which God has impoſed upon us, and thereby enſure to ourſelves, that Reward of Inheritance, which he hath promiſed to thoſe, who truly and faithfully diſcharge it. — And herein, The Advice of the Apoſtle, before us, may ſerve as a Guide and Director. "Servants, obey your Maſters in all things."

The Particulars of this Obedience, and the Manner in which they are to perform them, come now to be con-

ſidered; which will fall under the following Particulars, [viz.] Fear and Reverence, Submiſſion and Humility, Fidelity and Truth, Diligence and Attention, Cheerfulneſs, Peace and good humour. — And,

1. Fear and Reverence. It is the Apoſtle's Advice; Maſters are to be obeyed "with Fear and Trembling."

This may intend the Caution that ſhould be on the Minds of Servants, leſt they fail in the Obedience they owe their Maſters, and the Reverence in which they ſhould hold their Perſons and Commands, and is, therefore to be expreſſed both in their Words and Actions: — in their Words, by forbearing all irreverent and indecent Expreſſions; by giving ſuch reſpectful Titles as their Place and Station require; by ſpeaking well of them, if they can with Truth, or otherwiſe to be ſilent, and conceal their Infirmities; — in their Actions, by a modeſt and reſpectful Behaviour, by obſerving their Commands, and doing what they think will be pleaſing and agreeable to them: and thus, all that Forwardneſs and indecent Familiarity is forbidden, which breeds Contempt, and by bringing both Parties on a Level, defeats the End of this moſt important Relation. So the Apoſtle Peter ſays, "Servants, be ſubject to your Maſters with all fear."

This Fear is a natural Reſtraint upon the Giddineſs and

and Perverseness of our Nature, it awakens all our Caution and Diligence, and makes us attentive and observant: it makes us careful to understand the Directions of our Superiors, and diligent to execute them. And therefore we may say of it in this Case, as Eliphaz does to Job, "Is not this thy Fear, thy Confidence?" The Sense of a proper Awe upon our Minds gives us the best Assurance of our having a due Regard to the Commands of our Superiors, and the Discharge of our Duty. Besides, this Fear is the great Principle of Prudence, as well as Industry: it awakens the Abilities of the Soul, sets them to work upon their proper Objects, and urges them to their proper Ends. Almost all Knowledge, as well as Discipline and Virtue, are founded in Fear. "The Fear of the Lord, (saith Solomon,) is the Beginning of Wisdom: a good Understanding have all they that do thereafter." And, as the Fear of the highest Authority naturally leads us to the highest and most excellent Wisdom (the Knowledge of the Laws and Will of our Creator;) so the Reverence we owe to the inferior Degrees of it leads us to proportionable Degrees of Discretion and Prudence in the Conduct of our Lives. And therefore Servants are to be awfully observant and obedient to the Commands of their Masters, not only for Conscience-sake, but likewise on Account of that Improvement of their own

Minds and Manners, which ſuch a Reverence and Fear of Authority will naturally inſpire. — But, 2dly, A ſecond Duty is Humility and Submiſſion, natural Reſults of Fear. Theſe are ſo eſſentially the Properties of a Servant, as in Reaſon to need but little Enforcement; their State ſufficiently indicates it; and their Continuance in Favour depends upon it. (*)

St. Peter, indeed, judges this ſo neceſſary, that he directs Servants, even when they ſuffer wrongfully, to bear it with Patience, as a thing acceptable to God. But, if they are puniſhed or rebuked for a Fault, it is not ſufficient that they anſwer not again; for they muſt alſo amend their Fault, as a Proof of their due Submiſſion to their Maſter's Will, for God's Sake. — Now, To be humble, according to the Apoſtle's Account of this amiable Temper, is "to think ſoberly of ourſelves as we ought;" that is, to conceive of our Characters, Abilities, and Rank in Life, agreeably to what they really are, and to conduct ourſelves accordingly. Now, although Servants are upon an Equality with their Maſters in Regard of Nature, and may be ſuperior to them in Reſpect of Ability for the Buſineſs they undertake, yet their Condition in Life is vaſtly inferior. The Maſter hath Property, the Servant little or none; the former is in a Situation of Power and Honour, the latter in that of Service and Dependence; the One has

(*) See No. 88, of the Spectator. Au-

Authority to demand Obedience, the other is obliged by his own voluntary Engagements to render it. It is contrary, therefore, to all Idea of Truth, Equity, and Decency, for a Servant to conceive of his Master as his Equal, and to treat him as such.(*) for Persons in this inferior Station to affect Authority and Dominion, is an Evil "for which," the Wise Man tells us, "the Earth is disquieted, and which it cannot bear." And this Inversion of all Order he describes by a Kind of Caricatura that cannot fail of exciting Disgust, if not Ridicule; "I have seen Servants (says he) upon Horses, and Princes walking as Servants upon the Earth."

It is Providence that has made the Difference between the One and the Other. The Servant ought, therefore, to give "Honour to whom Honour is due," to cherish in his Breast an unfeigned Esteem for his Master as his Superior, to address him on all Occasions most respectfully, to carry himself in his Presence with all Humility and Reverence, listen in Silence to his Commands, to comply submissively to his Will, and on no Account to dispute his just Authority over him. This is in itself right. Difference of Character and Station requires such Deportment: nor can the Ends of the Relation between Master and Servant be properly attained without it. The

(*) See Note (‡), Page 48. Serm. CCCXCV.

The Voice of Decency, therefore, Cuſtom, and common Senſe, ſpeak loudly, in Favour of a modeſt, ſubmiſſive, reſpectful Deportment in Servants. (*) The Reverſe of it never fails to diſguſt.

In Scripture, Humility and Service are almoſt always uſed as convertible Terms; or, however, we ſcarce meet with the Word Servant but this Idea riſes to our View. So the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apoſtles, when they ſpeak of themſelves as the Servants of God, mean thereby to expreſs their abſolute Submiſſion to his Will, and their humble Obedience to his Commands. To this, as a Quality that ought never to be ſeparated from the Character of a Servant, the bleſſed God refers when he ſays, "If I be a Maſter where is my Fear?" And when the Apoſtle reminds the Ephefians how he had acquitted himſelf among them as the Servant of Chriſt, he tells them that "he had ſerved the Lord with all Humility of Mind." And when the ſame Apoſtle would excite the Philippians to "that

(*) How much Mankind are agreed on this Subject, is evident from the Similarity of Behaviour required of Perſons in this Station in moſt Countries and Ages; ſuch as ſtanding in the Preſence of their Superiors, waiting upon them, liſtening in Silence to their Commands, not anſwering again, yielding reſpectfully to their Opinion, and aſſiduouſly endeavouring to pleaſe. Indeed ſo congenial is the Idea of Humility to the Character of a Servant, that when we adopt this latter Term in our Epiſtolary Correſpondence with one another, we uſually add the Epithet *humble* to it.

"that Lowlineſs of Mind, which induces Men to "eſteem others better than themſelves," he inſtantly holds up Chriſt to their View in the Character of a Servant: "He made himſelf of no Reputation, and took on him the Form of a Servant, and humbled himſelf, and became obedient to Death."

Here we might ſhew at large, would the Time admit, that the Genius of the Goſpel, ſo ſtrikingly expreſſed in that great Act of Condeſcenſion juſt referred to; that the Meekneſs, Submiſſion, and Readineſs to ſerve one another which are every where recommended in the New Teſtament; and the many particular Examples of this Kind there ſet before us, all unite to enforce the Duty here inculcated upon Servants. But there is one very ſingular Fact related of our Saviour, which muſt not paſs unnoticed, [viz.] his condeſcending Behaviour to his Diſciples juſt before his laſt Sufferings. Tho he was their Maſter, yet aſſuming the Character of a Servant, "he laid aſide his Garments, took a Towel and girded himſelf, and poured Water into a Baſon; and having waſhed their Feet, he wiped them with the Towel wherewith he was girded:" and then ſays, "If I, your Lord and Maſter, have waſhed your Feet, ye alſo ought to waſh one another's Feet."

Can any Chriſtians think of this, and not be diſpoſed to Acts of Humility? Can any Chriſtian Ser-

vants more especially think of this, and not feel the Propriety of rendering HUMBLE Obedience to their Masters? — But,

3dly, Fidelity. Justice, Faithfulness, and Honesty are prime Duties in a Servant, and ought therefore to be particularly attended to; his own Conscience, and his Master's Interest being more nearly concerned in it than in any other; it being oftentimes in the Power of a wicked Servant, by one Hour's wilful Villany in this Point, to ruin the best Master and wealthiest Man. And therefore the Apostle, in the Words of the Text, enjoins Servants to be obedient to their Masters, "in Single Acts, punishable by the Law, are plainly acknowledged as such. But besides these, there are other lesser Ones, but too variously and frequently committed; such as Bribes, false Weights and Measures, by which the Servants are profited, and the Master injured; in short, all possible Ways whereby Servants are wont to make Gain, or Interest, or Friendship for themselves, to the Loss and Damage of their Masters: for all these Ways of Gain are direct Frauds and Thefts, and are but the more criminal, as they are contrived with more Subtilty and Security.

There are, doubtless, &c. ☞ (under)

As the World is conſtituted, it is impoſſible for Men to have or tranſact Affairs in Life without confiding in others, upon a thouſand Occaſions; and, on whom can they depend with ſo much Security as on him that eats of his own Bread, and is bound by all the Ties of Duty & Conſcience to be faithful to him? And what Advantage would it be to be Maſters, to be ſecure that their Servants would not themſelves cheat them, if at the ſame Time, thro' their Idleneſs or Negligence, they ſuffer others to defraud them?

And therefore, he that ſuffers his Maſter to be injured thro his Fault, altho without Profit to himſelf, betrays his Truſt, and is as criminal in the Sight of God, as if he had injured him for his own Advantage; nay, rather, he is more criminal; for he that injures his Maſter for his own Profit hath ſome Plea, ſome Pretence for his Villany, and ſome Temptation to it: whereas he that injures him without any Advantage to himſelf hath no Pretence, not ſo much as the Excuſe of a Temptation for his Wickedneſs; and therefore ſuch a One takes to himſelf the moſt ſcandalous and de-

ſelves, as Servants do, to be honeſt. — Upon this Account it is, that there is more Wickedneſs in the Theft of Servants, than in that of Strangers, becauſe it is accompanied with Falſehood and Treachery, againſt what there is no Guard. And this is the Reaſon why the Law makes it Treaſon for a Servant to kill his Maſter during his Servitude. Serm. CCCXCV.

Singleneſs of Heart;" (i.e) with an honeſt and upright Mind: and directs Titus to exhort Servants to "be obedient to their Maſters, and to pleaſe them well in all things; not anſwering again, nor purloining; but ſhewing all good Fidelity." — The Maſter's Intereſt is to be the, &c. ☞ (under)

to be the Servant's Object. His Perſon, his Character, his Family, his Habitation and Property he is to defend to the utmoſt of his Power, not injuring either of them himſelf, nor ſuffering others to injure them.

Diſhoneſty is univerſally acknowledged to be a Crime; but all Men do not conſider ſufficiently how many things come under the Notion of it. All groſs Acts, puniſhable by the Law, are plainly acknowledged as ſuch. But beſides theſe, there are other leſſer Ones, but too variouſly and frequently committed; ſuch as Bribes, falſe Weights and Meaſures, by which the Servants are profited, and the Maſter injured; in ſhort, all poſſible Ways whereby Servants are wont to make Gain, or Intereſt, or Friendſhip for themſelves, to the Loſs and Damage of their Maſters: for all theſe Ways of Gain are direct Frauds and Theſts, and are but the more criminal, as they are contrived with more Subtilty and Security.

There are, doubtleſs, &c. ☞ (under)

they likewiſe break Faith, and betray their Truſt at the (under)

As the World is conſtituted, it is impoſſible for Men to have or tranſact Affairs in Life without confiding in others, upon a thouſand Occaſions; and, on whom can they depend with ſo much Security as on him that eats of his own Bread, and is bound by all the Ties of Duty & Conſcience to be faithful to him? And what Advantage would it be to be Maſters, to be ſecure that their Servants would not themſelves cheat them, if at the ſame Time, thro' their Idleneſs or Negligence, they ſuffer others to defraud them?

And therefore, he that ſuffers his Maſter to be injured thro his Fault, altho without Profit to himſelf, betrays his Truſt, and is as criminal in the Sight of God, as if he had injured him for his own Advantage; nay, rather, he is more criminal; for he that injures his Maſter for his own Profit hath ſome Plea, ſome Pretence for his Villany, and ſome Temptation to it: whereas he that injures him without any Advantage to himſelf hath no Pretence, not ſo much as the Excuſe of a Temptation for his Wickedneſs; and therefore ſuch a One takes to himſelf the moſt ſcandalous and de-

ſtroys, as Servants do, to be honeſt. — Upon this Account it is, that there is more Wickedneſs in the Theft of Servants, than in that of Strangers, becauſe it is accompanied with Falſehood and Treachery, againſt what there is no Guard. And this is the Reaſon why the Law makes it Treaſon for a Servant to kill his Maſter during his Servitude. Serm. CCCXCV.

Singleneſs of Heart;" (i.e) with an honeſt and upright Mind: and directs Titus to exhort Servants to "be obedient to their Maſters, and to pleaſe them well in all things; not anſwering again, nor purloining; but ſhewing all good Fidelity." — The Maſter's Intereſt is to be the, &c. (under)

to be the Servant's Object. His Perſon. his Charac-

There are, doubtleſs, various Degrees of this Fault; ſome not near ſo bad as others: but it is the ſame Kind of Fault in all of them: beſides that the ſmaller Degrees lead to the greater. And, all Diſhoneſty, bad as it is in other Perſons, is yet worſe in thoſe who are intruſted, as Servants are; and things put in their Power upon that Truſt, which if they break, they are much baſer, and more villanous than common Thieves; becauſe they do not only defraud their Maſter, but they likewiſe break Faith, and betray their Truſt at the (under)

As the World is constituted, it is impossible for Men to have or transact Affairs in Life without confiding in others, upon a thousand Occasions; and, on whom can they depend with so much Security as on him that eats of his own Bread, and is bound by all the Ties of Duty & Conscience to be faithful to him? And what Advantage would it be to be Masters, to be secure that their Servants would not themselves cheat them, if at the same Time, thro' their Idleness or Negligence, they suffer others to defraud them?

And therefore, he that suffers his Master to be injured thro his Fault, altho without Profit to himself, betrays his Trust, and is as criminal in the Sight of God, as if he had injured him for his own Advantage; nay, rather, he is more criminal; for he that injures his Master for his own Profit hath some Plea, some Pretence for his Villany, and some Temptation to it: whereas he that injures him without any Advantage to himself hath no Pretence, not so much as the Excuse of a Temptation for his Wickedness; and therefore such a One takes to himself the most scandalous and de-

selves, as Servants do, to be honest. — Upon this Account it is, that there is more Wickedness in the Theft of Servants, than in that of Strangers, because it is accompanied with Falsehood and Treachery, against what there is no Guard. And this is the Reason why the Law makes it Treason for a Servant to kill his Master during his Servitude. Serm. CCCXCV.

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(*) Of all Theſts, Breach of Truſt is the worſt: as Servants have given their Faith to be juſt and honeſt, their Villany is greater than that of others, who, though they ſteal more, have not bound themſelves,

As the World is conſtituted, it is impoſſible for Men to have or tranſact Affairs in Life without confiding in others, upon a thouſand Occaſions; and, on whom can they depend with ſo much Security as on him that eats of his own Bread, and is bound by all the Ties of Duty & Conſcience to be faithful to him? And what Advantage would it be to be Maſters, to be ſecure that their Servants would not themſelves cheat them, if at the ſame Time, thro' their Idleneſs or Negligence, they ſuffer others to defraud them?

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deteſtable Character in the World, that of being wicked for Wickedneſs Sake. (*)

A Servant, therefore, muſt neither take to himſelf, nor give to another, or conſent to the taking or giving, whatever he knows is not allowed, or durſt not do with his

(*) The Conſequences of this Perfidy to the Maſter, is the very ſame with wilful Fraud and Theft. For what matters it to the Maſter, whether he be injured or ruined by his Servant's Fraud, or by his Negligence, his Leave or Connivance? So that the Breach of Truſt in Servants, and the Evil of it to their Maſter is exactly the ſame in both. He truſted them with his Subſtance, and they betrayed him to his Damage, perhaps, to his Ruin.

It is not only incumbent, therefore, on every good Servant, to be juſt, honeſt and upright himſelf, but to take care, as far as in him lies, that others be juſt alſo: and not to ſuffer his Maſter, at any Time, to be injured or defrauded. Whereas, but too many cheat themſelves into an Opinion, that they are not anſwerable for the Wickedneſs which they connive at; and, that they can only ſuffer for what they do themſelves. But this is a miſerable and fatal Self-deluſion, a Deluſion, which will ruin their Fame, Character, and Intereſt here; and withal, greatly endanger the Safety of their Souls hereafter. For, in the Caſe now before us, as well as in innumerable other Inſtances which might be mentioned, that Servant who ſees his Maſter robbed, or betrayed; who hears him calumniated and abuſed, and is ſo mean, ſo timid and ungrateful, as to paſs it over unnoticed and unreſented, but ill deſerves that Protection and Reward which he receives from him.

There is not the leaſt Doubt to be made, but that, in theſe Circumſtances, to be ſilent is to be guilty; and he who conceals the Crime, is, in ſome Meaſure, acceſſary to it. *Qui tacet, conſentire videtur.*

his Maſter's Conſent. Servants ſhould be exceeding careful not to embezzle the leaſt Part of that which is intruſted to them; becauſe, when they have once brought themſelves, by ſpecious Arguments, to believe that to defraud or injure another, may be SOMETIMES lawful, they will ſoon be perſuaded that it is ALWAYS ſo; and who will ſerve or defend thoſe who have betrayed that Confidence which was repoſed in them; who have ruined and deſtroyed thoſe, whom they had ſworn to guard and protect. (*)

But there is one Point wherein the Fidelity of Servants is more eminently required than in any other whatſoever, and yet where they are wont to abuſe and betray their Truſt more, than in any other, [viz] the Care of their Maſter's Children. I ſhall omit a thouſand Inſtances of Miſconduct and Abuſe, and inſtance only in two. The firſt is, that deteſtable Cuſtom among Servants, of teaching Children Vice and Wickedneſs, as the firſt Rudiments of Knowledge. (‡) And this is ſo notorious, that, take any Child you meet, and it is odds but the firſt Sentence or Word he learnt to ſpeak, was either an Oath or an ill Name: and if Servants

(*) It goes a great Way towards making a Man faithful, to let him underſtand we think him ſo. He that does but ſuſpect a Man will deceive him, gives him a Kind of Right ſo to do. Deceit deſerves Deceit; and the End of Treachery is to have no Truſt.

(‡) See Vol. xix. Page 234. Serm. CCCXCV.

vants are rebuked for this Villany, they anſwer, there is no Manner of Harm in it, becauſe the poor Child does not know what he ſays. Perhaps he does not; but yet it is more probable that he does; for it is certain, that Children often underſtand Words even before they can ſpeak them; and even, if they do ſpeak ſome ill Words before they underſtand them, doubtleſs, upon your Principles, it will not be your Fault if they continue long in that Ignorance; for the ſame Corruption of Mind that prompted you to teach them thoſe ill Words, will alſo prompt you to make them underſtand what is meant by them, as ſoon as you can; and not only underſtand, but practiſe too. Little do ye conſider, that the firſt Impreſſions made upon Children alway ſink the deepeſt, and laſt the longeſt, and are hardly poſſible to be effaced from the Mind. Solomon therefore rightly adviſes, "Train up a Child in the Way he ſhould go, and, when he is old, he will not depart from it." And the Obſervation is full as true, I am afraid, more ſo, if you train him up the Way he ſhould not go. Shame is the great Guardian of Youth, the great Barrier that ſecures them from Sin and Wickedneſs; and if that be early taken away, a Flood of Vice will break in upon them like a Torrent, and overwhelm the whole Man. Alas! little do ye conſider what you will have to anſwer for at the great Day of

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Account, who, in Return for all the Kindneſs of a good Maſter, have deſtroyed, perhaps, his only Child, and turned the Innocence of an Angel into the Guilt of a Villain. Would to God, that, in Order to deter Servants from this abominable Practice, there were Laws to make all Crimes of this Kind puniſhable by the moſt tormenting Death; and yet, when that was done, it would make but little Atonement for thoſe infinitely greater Torments of Hell, to which thoſe Wretches had betrayed ſo many helpleſs and innocent Infants.

The ſecond Inſtance of the Infidelity of Servants to the Children of their Maſters, and too often to themſelves, is Flattery; a Vice which is founded in the worſt Corruption of a wicked Heart, and is the greateſt Deſtroyer of every Virtue in the Soul; it is a rank Manure which raiſes nothing but Weeds in the beſt Soils. Nor is this all; for as it raiſes and feeds the worſt Weeds; ſo it alſo deſtroys the beſt Plants, and ſuffers nothing good or ſalutary to poſſeſs the Heart.

A Servant, then, is to employ himſelf faithfully in the Buſineſs of his Maſter; his Subſtance in particular being intruſted to his Care, he is not to embezzle it, or waſte it, or put any of it without Permiſſion to his own Uſe; but to keep it with Attention and improve it. The Buſineſs he is commanded to do is to be done,

not ſuperficially, but effectually; and his Time is to be conſidered not as his own but as his Maſter's, and therefore to be employed faithfully in his Service. His Maſter's Secrets he is to keep. All Deſigns formed againſt his Character, Perſon, or Intereſt which he happens to come to the Knowledge of, he is to diſcloſe, and to uſe his utmoſt Endeavours to prevent. And every Opportunity that offers of forwarding his Affairs, he is to ſeize and improve. In ſhort, his Maſter's Honour, Safety, and Happineſs, he is in every Inſtance to conſult, conſidering his Intereſt as his own.

And can any One doubt whether all this is in itſelf right and fit? If he can, let him reverſe what has been ſaid, and ſuppoſe that inſtead of making his Maſter's Intereſt his Object, he was wholly indifferent to it; inſtead of taking care of his Property, to waſte and deſtroy it; and inſtead of ſerving him, to injure him. Would not any Man's Feelings be hurt at ſuch a Practice as this, ſo contrary to all Idea of Truth, Integrity and Juſtice? Or if a Servant is totally void of Principle, and ſo wretchedly depraved as not to diſcern the real Difference between Good & Evil, can we ſuppoſe it poſſible that his Maſter ſhould approve ſuch Conduct, or that he himſelf, if he were a Maſter, would be pleaſed with ſuch Treatment from a Servant? Let him conſider, whether Infidelity in Servants does not

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tend directly to the Diſſolution of the Relation between them and their Maſters, and of Conſequence to the Deſtruction of all Order in Society, and to the eſſential Injury as well of the Poor as the Rich? And let him further conſider whether if there be a God, that God does not diſapprove of ſuch Conduct, and will not ſooner or later call Men to an Account for it?

Fidelity, on the contrary, can ſcarce be mentioned but it approves itſelf to every Mind. There is a Kind of Honour that is accounted ſacred among the baſeſt of Men. They who have been Accomplices in Schemes of Fraud and Oppreſſion, have yet conſidered themſelves as bound to one another by a Tie, which ought on no Account to be torn aſunder. (*) And what is this but an Acknowledgment on their Parts, that Honour and good Faith are Virtues to be regarded in Society? So that both good and bad Men are agreed on this Point. Fidelity is what God approves: for he has not only told us by the plain Dictates of Reaſon, that he is himſelf, and indeed cannot but be, moſt juſt, true, and faithful; but he has condeſcended expreſsly to aſſure us that he is ſo, by the repeated Declarations of his Prophets and Apoſtles. And it cannot ſurely but be agreeable to him, that we ſhould copy after his moral

(*) Even Thieves and Robbers have their Laws.

moral Excellencies. Fidelity in Servants he hath ſtrictly enjoined in innumerable Paſſages, both in the Old and New Teſtament. It is the direct Language of the Text, and other ſimilar Paſſages. All Guile, Duplicity, Eye-ſervice, and Purloining from their Maſter's Subſtance, are peremptorily forbidden. And they are expreſsly commanded to ſerve their Maſters "in Singleneſs of Heart, fearing God, and ſhewing all good Fidelity." And they are aſſured that their Fidelity, rendered on good Principles, ſhall not fail of being rewarded by him. This Idea is implied in our Saviour's Reaſoning on the Fidelity we owe to him as our Divine Maſter: "Who is that faithful & wiſe Servant, whom his Lord hath made Ruler over his Houſehold, to give them Meat in due Seaſon? Bleſſed is that Servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing. Verily I ſay unto you, that he ſhall make him Ruler over all his Goods." But a Recompence is more directly promiſed to them in the Paſſages where Faithfulneſs is inculcated upon them. "Whatſoever good thing any Man doth, the ſame ſhall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." And again, "Of the Lord ye ſhall receive the Reward of the Inheritance." But the Utility & Importance of this moſt juſt and reaſonable Principle merits a more particular Conſideration.

What Inhumanity and Baſeneſs muſt there be in the Heart

Heart of him who can wilfully injure the Man at whose Table he is daily fed, and at whose Hands he receives the just Recompence of his supposed good Services! And how very painful and humiliating must the Calamity be to Masters, to sink into Poverty and Want thro the Neglect, Avarice, and Perfidy, not of Strangers, but of those who dwell under their Roof, and make up a Part of their Families! On the contrary, as it is in the Power of Servants, by a faithful Attention to their Duty, to contribute to the Honour, Ease, and Happiness of their Masters; how great must their mutual Pleasure be in the Attainment of these Objects!

Indeed, the very Existence of domestic Connections, as well as their Prosperity and Comfort, depend not a little upon the good Behaviour of Servants. And how much the Community at large is affected hereby, the History of every Country sufficiently shews.

When Profligacy and Want of Principle universally prevail among this Order of Men, the most alarming Consequences to the State may be naturally apprehended. Whereas Peace & Prosperity are usually enjoyed when the Reverse of this is the Character of the Times. But then it should here be observed, in Justice to the inferior Part of Society, that Corruption among them is most commonly the Effect of the ill Example set them by their Superiors; but the Fault of

one Party will not excuſe that of another. The former ſpend of their own, the latter ſteal for the Purpoſe.

If Servants find themſelves, at any Time, tempted to defraud their Maſters, let them conſider theſe two things, 1ſt. That beſides the Wickedneſs of it, its Diſcovery here, will, moſt likely, be their Ruin.

2dly, That whether diſcovered or not, it will be a ſore Evil upon their Conſcience; and, without Repentance, will occaſion their future Miſery.

Nothing is ſo neceſſary to a Servant, as the Reputation of being juſt and honeſt; (*) and nothing is more certain to undo them than a bad Fame, and the Suſpicion of falſe Dealing with their Maſters. (‡)

They

(*) *Vir ſpectatæ Fidei.* Good Service, like other good Performances, generally repays itſelf in great Meaſure; it gains the Favour and Eſteem of all Men. Care and Diligence, with Faithfulneſs and Honeſty, recommend themſelves upon all Occaſions, and raiſe their Poſſeſſors above their Fortune, and give them Reputation and Good-will that make amends for the Meanneſs of their Condition; ſuch conſequently have laid to themſelves a good Foundation for their own Subſiſtence when they have Occaſion; the Neighbourhood will remember their Diligence and Honeſty, and promote their Good, by giving a good Report of them; and conſequently, they will be forwarded by all, and truſted more than others of greater Skill and deeper Inſight.

(‡) When a Servant ſteals, he undermines the very Ground on which he ſtands.—he thinks, perhaps, he is only taking ſomething from his Maſter, whilſt he is taking away from himſelf the very Means of his own Subſiſtence. "A Thief ſhall by no means inhabit with thee." *Ne Annum improbam tuis unquàm Ædibus recipias.*

They have nothing to depend on, in all these Cases, but the Hopes of lying concealed, and that their Thefts will never be discovered; which Hopes are yet so often disappointed, that very few, who have for any Time been guilty of this Practice, do escape being found out, which destroys their Character. — Indeed,

The Reputation of Servants is so valuable, that many Masters will not charge them directly with this Sin, who yet are sufficiently assured that they are guilty: Others have Cause to suspect, but, for prudential Reasons, will not accuse: — and Others see it, but will not irritate too far, and make their Servants desperate by the Publication, hoping that they will reform.

Servants, therefore, are deceived if they think that all are ignorant who are silent; and that they are unsuspected, because not charged directly with Dishonesty. This is the Rule that hired Servants may measure their Safety by. — But,

Indulgence and Forbearance is not discreetly used by Masters with Respect to them, who are so moveable and fugative, as to be always wandering from Place to Place; who ought not to be born with, for a Moment, in their wicked Practices; (*) but, they are proper enough with Respect to Servants of a better Rank, and bound by Agreement or Contract for a Term of Time.

(*) See the Note, Vol. xii. Page 407, 408. Serm. CCCXCV.

Time. But, it may be, these Reasons may not be received.

Let such Servants, then, consider, that whether their Wickedness be discovered to Men, or no; they are yet open to the Eye of God, and their Consciences will be always burthened by it.

The Fruits of Injustice may gratify some vain Desire for the present, but when That is over, the Mind is immediately disquieted at what is past, afraid of Discovery and Shame; and, withal, knows that the Fact must be repented of, before it can be pardoned: all or any of which must be much more uneasy, than the Denial of those Desires could have been at first.

Those Servants, therefore, who wrong or betray, who injure or neglect their Masters, have Reason to fear that God whom they have offended; because, when we are deficient in any of those Duties, which we owe to our Neighbour (and our Master is particularly such) we transgress the Laws of the Most-High.

In all our Relations and Connections with each other, God is the Witness to every Contract, and must know whether we perform it or not; He is the great Guardian of the Rights and Privileges of all Mankind; He sits on the Seat to "do Judgment and Justice;" and when any are oppressed or injured here, to Him they must appeal for Redress. If

If the Servant, therefore, wrong his Maſter, if he is diſhoneſt, ſlothful, idle and extravagant, God will avenge the Cauſe of the injured, and caſt "the unprofitable Servant into utter Darkneſs, where ſhall be weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing of Teeth."

Whilſt, on the other Hand, if the "Servant obey his Maſter in all things, with Singleneſs of Heart, fearing God;" if he is honeſt, faithful, diligent and grateful, "he ſhall, (as the Apoſtle ſays) receive the Inheritance."

The Pleaſures of a peaceful Conſcience infinitely outweigh all the Gratifications, which the lawleſs Abuſe of a Maſter's Subſtance or Time can poſſibly procure. How happy to be able to ſay in an Hour of cool Reflection, "I have not only been anxious not to injure thoſe I have ſerved, but it hath been my Aim to promote their Intereſts to the utmoſt of my Power!" Such a Character too cannot fail to ſecure the affectionate Regards of ingenuous Maſters. It will balance the Account with many other Failings. And if one Situation a faithful Servant may be in, does not prove in every Reſpect agreeable, it will be a certain Introduction to another. This is a Matter of ſuch Conſequence, that it is the firſt thing enquired after, and every other good Quality may be diſpenſed with rather than this. In ſhort, he who conſults his Intereſt both as to this Life and another, will reſolve to be honeſt, and not only

to be ſo in the general Idea of that Term, but to make his Maſter's Intereſt his own.

Striking Examples might here be adduced to illuſtrate what we have recommended: But, among the many that occur in Scripture, we muſt content ourſelves with little more than the bare Mention of a few only, intreating Servatns to dwell more particularly on them in their Meditations. How faithfully did Abraham's Servant execute his Maſter's Commands reſpecting Iſaac, in the Matter of his Marriage, and ſo fulfilled the Oath he had taken. Joſeph's Fidelity in the Houſe of Potiphar cannot be enough applauded: and however this extraordinary Inſtance of domeſtic Virtue was for a while eclipſed by the thick, over-bearing Clouds of Adverſity, yet it quickly ſhone out amidſt the Splendours of unexampled Proſperity and Glory. Moſes was the Servant of God, and had the honourable Atteſtation of his divine Maſter to his Character, that "he was faithful in all his Houſe as a Servant." This Honour too the Prophets and Apoſtles repeatedly enjoyed. And if ſuch Examples may receive any Illuſtration from their Oppoſites, I might mention that of Gehazi, the Servant of Eliſha, who for his wretched Infidelity and Avarice entailed upon himſelf and his Family, that very Diſeaſe of which Naaman was cured, and in whoſe Opinion by his Unfaithfulneſs he had cruelly

cruelly abuſed the Character of his innocent Maſter. To which I might add the deplorable Inſtance of Judas, who, for his Treachery to the beſt of Maſters, drew down the moſt tremendous Vengeance on his guilty Head. But theſe gloomy Ideas we would expel from the Minds of thoſe we mean affectionately to allure to their Duty, by holding up to their View the illuſtrious Character of Jeſus of Nazareth, of whom it was prophecied that as "he ſhould be the Servant of God to raiſe up the Tribes of Jacob, ſo Righteouſneſs ſhould be the Girdle of his Loins, and Faithfulneſs the Girdle of his Reins." And thoſe Servants who have believed his Doctrine, and entered into the Spirit of it, though previous to this they were void of all Principle, have become ſincere, honeſt, and faithful. Oneſimus, before his Converſion was unprofitable to his Maſter Philemon; but afterwards, was profitable both to him, and to the Apoſtle Paul, by whom he was begotten in his Bonds at Rome.

Sermon

SERMON CCCXCVI.

On the same Subject.
Manner of it, and Motives to it, continued.

Colos. iii. 22. "Servants, obey in all things your "Masters according to the Flesh: not with Eye-"service, as Men-pleasers; but in Singleness of "Heart, fearing God."

The Duties we have already considered, as due from Servants to their Masters, were Fear and Reverence, Submission and Humility, to these we added Justice, Faithfulness & Honesty—The Duties, therefore, now to be considered, are, Discretion, Truth, Diligence, Cheerfulness, Peace, and Good-Humour. And,

1st. Discretion. This is but another Branch of that Faithfulness which we have already considered, inasmuch as to be wasteful and extravagant, is as injurious to the Master as Theft itself.

No Business should be neglected or delayed beyond its proper Season; nothing mis-managed for Want of thinking about it, nothing heedlessly, much less design-

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edly, wasted and squandered; but all reasonable Frugality and good Contrivance shewn. (*)

Every Servant would think this but common Justice in his own Case; and therefore should do it as common Justice in that of his Master.

To appear frugal and careful in the Master's Sight, and in his Ablence to be wasteful and profuse, is not only Eye-service and Hypocrisy, but Falsehood and Injustice. It is doing the Master Hurt, whilst he thinks himself well served.

This is a Matter which Servants are not apt sufficiently to consider; — Many think it well if they do not directly and plainly defraud their Masters of their Property; — whereas there is little Difference between a profuse Waste, which is not allowed, and purloining things feloniously.

If, indeed, it be so, that a sordid Spirit will not make such Allowance as is fit and reasonable; it will, then, not be faulty to take what is convenient, tho it be counted Waste and Profusion by incompetent Judges. Tho it were better to quit such Service, than act against the Master's Will and Order: — but, in all such Cases, where there is no Necessity of this Nature, Waste and Profusion are faulty, and against the Duty of good Servants: It is what they never think fit to discover; but

(*) *Vaticinum Servum Dominus honorat.* Serm. CCCXCVI.

but dissemble and conceal; they know it is not pleasing to any Master, and consequently know it ought not to be done by them.

Some perhaps may imagine that their Master's Estate and Income is well able to afford them to be careless and extravagant.

But, the Truth is, few or no Incomes can afford this. For, if it be practised in one thing, why not in another? – and, what must follow, if it be practised in all? – That certainly, which we see daily [viz] that Persons of the greatest Estates are distressed and ruined by it. (*) — Or,

Tho it would not distress them at all, yet a Master's Wealth is no more a Justification of Servants wasting what belongs to him, than of their stealing it. And, if One be dishonest, the Other also must.

The next general Duty we mentioned, and a Branch of Faithfulness already considered, is Truth.

This, as it is a general Duty, to be observed of all Men, so it is a Duty most especially incumbent on Servants.

(*) To make a splendid Appearance, to boast a numerous Retinue, to have a Croud of Vassals attendant on our Pleasure, and subservient to our Commands, may sooth the Pride and Vanity of our Hearts; but doth it not often happen, that these are Treasures we pay dearly for? Insomuch, that the very thing which caused the Envy, is that which most deserves the Pity of our Inferiors; being but so many Spies on our Actions, and wasteful Consumers of our Substance.

Servants. A Breach of this, whether Servants are guilty of it among themselves, or to their Masters; whether against, or in Favour of, one another; or even in their own Favour; there are few things, by which they may both do and suffer more Harm than by a lying Tongue.

Lying is a Sin very odious to God, and most detestable to Men. "Lying Lips are an Abomination to the Lord." It is of no lasting Benefit; "Lying Lips are but for a Moment." It scarce serves a present Turn; and, when discovered, leaves the Offender in perpetual Disgrace. It is the Effect of Cowardice; a base and slavish Fear. Servants are as the Hands and Eyes of Masters, and ought therefore to report nothing but what is true. — Upon these Accounts it is, that holy David resolves, for himself, to "walk in his House with a perfect Heart;" and mentioning those who should be his Servants, and compose a Part of his Family, says, (among other like Characters,) "He that telleth Lies, shall not tarry in my Sight." (*)

Truth, therefore, is a necessary Quality in Servants. And, a further One, is, proper Secrefy. — For,

There is great Unfairness in betraying the Secrets either of their Master's Business, or his Family; or turning to his Disadvantage any thing that comes to their Knowledge by being employed under him; unless it be where Conscience obliges them to a Discovery; which

(*) See the whole of this 101 Psalm. Serm. CCCXCVI.

which is a Case that but seldom happens. And, excepting that Case, what they have promised to conceal, it is palpable Wickedness to disclose: — and, where they have not promised, yet they are taken into their Master's House to be Assistants and Friends, not Spies and Tale-bearers; to do Service, and not Harm, to him, and to all that are connected with him. — But further,

The next Duty is Diligence, — By Diligence we mean applying in earnest to the Work we undertake, setting about it with all our Might, losing no Time in the Prosecution of it, and labouring at it with Patience and Perseverance till we have accomplished it. The great Importance of this in every Affair of Life is acknowledged by all prudent sensible People. For however acute and ingenious a Person may be, he will make no Progress in any Art or Science if he does not apply. Knowledge is not to be acquired without hard Study, nor Wealth ordinarily without Industry. And how unfavourable Sloth is to Religion, every one must be sensible who has any Acquaintance with it.

But we are here speaking of the Duty of Servants: and, next to Fidelity, in its several Branches, Diligence surely is the principal Excellence in their Character.

No Eye but the Eye of God can see every thing at ALL Times, and in ALL Places; it is impossible that any Man, how careful and industrious soever he may be,

be, can provide for every Contingency, or himself see every thing executed which is necessary: he must depend in some Measure, therefore, on the Diligence, Care and Integrity of those beneath him. Consequently, whatever Industry or Faithfulness a reasonable Master would require, when present; the same, in the main, honest Servants will use, when he is absent: (*) for his Presence or Absence can make no Difference in their Duty. He hath agreed with them for their Time and Care, & Pains, and must not therefore be defrauded of them. It would be as just for a Master to detain Part of his Servant's Wages contracted for, as it is for a Servant to waste and misemploy that Time, and spare that Care and Labour, which is his Master's by Contract. His Time and Strength are no longer his own, they are his Master's, and to be employed in his Service;

(*) *Praesens, absentique idem sit.* As a Master cannot be at all Places at once, he must, in many Cases, trust his Servants: But he, that would be sure to have his Business well done, should (as far as it is possible) either do it himself, or see the doing of it; besides that many a good Servant is spoiled by a careless Master.

The Necessity of this Caution is as good a Lesson in Governments, as in private Families, for a Prince's leaving his Business wholly to his Ministers, without a strict Eye over them, is as dangerous an Error in Politicks, as a Master's committing all to his Servants, is in Oeconomicks. *Reges dormiunt, Populi ferocient. Absente Domino, fugunt famuli.* At best, *Plus videtur suis Oculis quam alienis.*

vice; and consequently he cannot employ himself as he pleases, but as his Master directs.

Servants are to be "obedient to their Masters, not with Eye-service, as Men-pleasers; but to shew all good Fidelity; in Singleness of Heart, fearing God," that is, they are to discharge the Duties of their Service out of a Sense of Conscience, in full Assurance that in so doing they do what God requires of them; for God requires Justice in all their Dealings, and will severely punish the Neglect and Violation of it: and therefore, although their Master doth not behold their Idleness, God sees it, and will require a severe Account of it: and they can no more escape his Vengeance than they can avoid his Sight.

And as they should understand the Business they covenant to do, so they should do it well. But it cannot be done well, if it is not minded. To this End therefore their Affairs should be arranged in an orderly Manner, and every Office regularly succeed each other. A reasonable Time being allowed for Food, Sleep, Recreation, and the Duties of Religion, not a Moment of the Remainder should be lost. All Trifling, Sauntering, and Loitering should be avoided, and especially idle Company, which is the Bane of domestic Happiness and Fidelity. When once Servants become slothful, it is much if they do not become artful and intriguing.

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However, having no other Object than their Ease and Pleasure, their Master's Commands will be disobeyed; or at most, the Service they render him will be what the Text calls, "Eye-service," the Order of the House will be neglected, its Substance wasted, its Affairs confused, and, in the End, the Family ruined. On the contrary, where each Servant minds his proper Business, applies himself diligently to it, and goes on regularly and perseveringly in it; Peace, Order, Plenty, and Cheerfulness will reign throughout the whole.

But their own Interest is concerned in this Matter, as well as that of their Masters, and the rest of the Family.

It has pleased God so to order the State of things here below, that Obedience, Diligence and Industry, should contribute not a little to Health, which is one of the principal Blessings of Life; and withal, are the sure Ways to Honour, Credit, and Prosperity, in the World.

Idleness will destroy the best Constitution both of Body and Mind. Numbers of People lose their Limbs for want of using them; whereas all the Powers of Soul and Body are improved by Application and Exercise. The greatest Proficients and Prodigies in all Wisdom and Science whatever, have all of them their Beginnings in the low Rudiments of Knowledge and Practice, with the rest of Mankind. Men are born

in the generality nearly equal; Inſtruction and Induſtry, Culture and Diligence, make the great Diſtinctions between Man and Man. Induſtry is of ſo excellent a Nature, that it will ſcarcely ſuffer any Bounds to be ſet to our Improvement; nor is it poſſible to ſay, to what Strength of Body and Mind unwearied Application will carry us at the laſt: and therefore Solomon moſt excellently adviſes, "Whatever thine Hand findeth to do, do it diligently, and with all thy Might." He well knew the Worth of Diligence, (and perhaps none but the wiſeſt Man that ever lived was acquainted with its full Value;) and therefore he is large in the Praiſe of it: "He becometh poor that dealeth with a ſlack Hand; but the Hand of the diligent maketh rich." Again, "The Hand of the diligent ſhall bear Rule; but the ſlothful ſhall be under Tribute." Again, "The Soul of the Sluggard deſireth, and hath nothing; but the Soul of the diligent ſhall be made fat." And again, "Seeſt thou a Man diligent in his Buſineſs? he ſhall ſtand before Kings; he ſhall not ſtand before mean Perſons." Such as have ſerved with Induſtry and Diligence, are ſecure of better Credit and more Succeſs in their After-life: the better Servants are to their Maſters, the better they will ſucceed, when they come to be Managers of their own Affairs. So that all the Labour and Care they take, with all the Skill and Improvement

provement they gain, will be all their own at the laſt, a Treaſure for themſelves, laid up in Store againſt their greateſt Need. At leaſt, it will keep them out of Idleneſs, the great Parent of Vice and Wickedneſs of every Kind, which will cloath them with Infamy & Rags, and bring them to certain Ruin at the laſt; and deſtroy both Body and Soul. If Servants, therefore, will not be diligent and induſtrious for their Maſter's Sake, they ſhould at leaſt be ſo for their own.

Diligence is urged upon us in the New Teſtament with the like Warmth as in the Old. In the very ſame Breath that we are commanded to ſerve the Lord, we are cautioned againſt being "ſlothful in Buſineſs: but fervent in Spirit, ſerving the Lord." The Theſſalonians are exhorted to "ſtudy to be quiet, and to do their proper Buſineſs, working with their own Hands." And "they who learn to be idle, and ſo become Tatlers and Buſy-bodies," are very ſeverely reprehended. The Admonitions of this Sort which here occur are too numerous to be recited. To this Object, more than one Parable of our Saviour's is directed, wherein he holds up to our View the Character of the diligent Servant on the one Hand, as attaining to great Honour and Wealth; and that of the ſlothful, on the other, as coming to Diſgrace, Poverty, and Wretchedneſs. (*)

And to

(*) Matt. 24th, and 25th Chapters.

And Scripture-Examples there are many which well deserve the Regard of Servants. Such was the Attention of Abraham's Servant to his Master's Affairs, that when he arrived at the House of Bethuel, the Father of Rebekah, however fatigued he might be with his Journey, he would not eat till he had delivered his Message. Jacob served his Uncle Laban diligently, "with all his Power," as he himself expresses it; and God rewarded him. So did Joseph his Master Potiphar, and afterwards Pharaoh: and to what Dignity and Power he arose we have already observed. The Diligence of the Prophets and Apostles, in the Service of their divine Master, is often mentioned in Scripture to their Honour; and having ceased from their Labours, they are now entered into Rest; and at the great Day of Account their painful and constant Exertions for the Glory of God and of Mankind, will be applauded in the Presence of Angels and Men. How worthy these Examples of our Imitation in the Service of God! And how worthy too of their's whom we are here exhorting to Diligence in the Service of their earthly Masters! But the Example of Christ, the Servant of God, and of all Servants the most diligent as well as faithful, demands their particular Attention. He lost no Time, spared no Pains, failed in no one Duty required of him. "Wist ye not," said he to his Parents

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on a certain Occaſion, "that I muſt be about my Father's Buſineſs." And on another, "My Meat is to do the Will of him who ſent me." And when he came to die, he could ſay what no one beſides himſelf could, that "he had finiſhed, fully perfected, the Work given him to do." This leads us to conſider further, another Property of this Service, [viz]

Cheerfulneſs. Servants are to obey their Maſters "with Good-will, doing Service:" that is, taking Delight in their Duty, and accounting themſelves happy in promoting their Maſter's Intereſts, agreeing with, and helping one another; ſo making the Work which they have to do, eaſy, and their Lives, which they are to lead together, comfortable.

This is a Virtue which crowns all the reſt, gives the finiſhing Stroke to the Character of good Servants, and renders what they do acceptable to their Maſters and eaſy to themſelves.

It is very unfit, that either their Maſters, or any Part of the Family ſhould ſuffer through their Ill-humour; and indeed, they ſuffer enough by it themſelves, to make reſtraining it well worth their Endeavour.

The Apoſtle, indeed, recommends this, as what will not only prevent all Evils, but, in itſelf, promote every Good in the Caſe, and ſtrengthen, and cement all the

reſt; [viz.] "Singleneſs of Heart," a pious conſcientious Regard to the Engagement we have entered into; "whatſoever ye do, (ſays he) do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto Men."

Whatſoever we do heartily, we ſhall always do effectually; Servants, therefore ſhould endeavour to inculcate in themſelves a Deſire to pleaſe and oblidge.

Love is, indeed, the Life and Soul of every relative Duty; the powerful enlivening Principle, which alone can inſpire us with Reſolution and Activity in the Execution of it: without this, even Diligence is ungrateful, and Submiſſion itſelf has the Air of Diſobedience; a cold, languid, ſpiritleſs Complyance with the Will of another ſeems forced and extorted, and when thoſe whom we expect to follow us thro Life, muſt be drawn reluctantly after us, it retards our Progreſs, and at the ſame Time takes off exceedingly from the Pleaſure of our Journey.

A Sourneſs and Reſtiveneſs to the Commands of Superiors is a ſure Indication of inherent Pride, that diſdains Subjection; and is much better fitted for Inſolence in Power, than Obedience in Subjection. And this Spirit of Inſolence is ſo frequently to be met with in Servants, that a Man who makes right Reflections upon it will find infinite Reaſon to bleſs the good Providence of God, by whoſe wiſe Appointment ſo many tur-

turbulent and malignant Spirits were placed in a Condition of the lowest Subjection; who, had they been raised to Dominion and Rule, would have been the greatest Monsters of Oppression and Tyranny that ever the World produced. Histories of all Ages are full of Examples to this Purpose: and that this is the Sense of Mankind upon the Point, may be collected from the Proverbs of all Nations, which have not failed to observe upon the remarkable Insolence of Persons raised from a low Condition to any Heights of Fortune. (*) And this is so apparent in a thousand Instances, that (as Sylla is said to have seen many Marius's in Cæsar) some Men of good Understanding have been confident, that they have observed many Neros in a common Footman, or Day-labourer: and therefore Persons of this Character, instead of indulging their innate Pride, in Insolence and Sullenness to their Superiors, should endeavour, to the utmost of their Power, to subdue it to the Dictates of their Duty: and remember, it was the great Goodness of God, to place them in that low Condition of Life, where the Malignity of their Nature would have the least Room to exert itself, and where they have avoided much of that Guilt, and Punishment, which higher Degrees of Power and Affluence would have devolved upon them.

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(*) *Et nihil asperius Humili, cùm surgit in Altum.*
Serm. CCCXCVI.

An unwilling, ill-natured, gloomy Servant is a Kind of Spectre in the House where he dwells, that ſtrikes Horror into the Minds of all that behold him. His ſurly Obſtinacy makes every One afraid of him; "He is not to be corrected by Words," as Solomon expreſſes it, "for though he underſtand, he will not anſwer." Let the Ability or the Fidelity of ſuch a Servant be what it may, they will not compenſate for theſe ill Qualities. Nor is it indeed imaginable that one of this Complexion will do his Buſineſs as it ought to be done. Few People bring any Work to Perfection which they attempt with Reluctance. Out of Humour with it they have not Inclination or Patience to go through with it: or if they have, it is done in ſo ſuperficial a Manner that it cannot give Satisfaction. And thus having no Heart for the Work, but ever toiling againſt the Stream, what is thus ill done coſts them as much Pains and Labour as if it were well done.

But the Reverſe is the Caſe, when reciprocal Truſt and Confidence have produced mutual Love and Affection, every thing then flows in an eaſy, uninterrupted Courſe of Joy and Satisfaction: Pleaſure and Duty go Hand in Hand, "Righteouſneſs and Peace kiſs each other," every Wiſh on each Side is prevented, and every Jealouſy removed; the Maſter's Will is known before it is expreſſed, and the Service performed even before it is commanded. Such

Such Servants will feel themſelves happy, and make all happy about them. Conſidering their Duty as their Intereſt, and having a natural Turn for it, remembering that Providence has placed them in the Rank they fill, and that they have covenanted to do the Duties of it; pleaſing themſelves with the Hope, that though it be an inferior Station, they ſhall in Time riſe to a ſuperior One, and aſſuring themſelves, that aiming to excel they ſhall not fail to pleaſe; occupied, with theſe cheerful and animating Ideas, they will ſcarce feel Pain or Fatigue in any of their Exertions, or if they do, it will be more than balanced by the Repoſe, Pleaſure, and Commendation that will follow. The Livelineſs of their Countenance, the Softneſs of their Addreſs, the Readineſs of their Anſwers, and their decent, reſpectful, good-natured Carriage will ſecure them the Good-will of all they ſerve. Their Maſters will conſider and treat them as their Friends, not their Slaves. The Children of the Family will quickly feel an affectionate Attachment to them. And the Relations and Acquaintance of the Houſe will have a Pleaſure in viſiting it, and go away admiring as well the kind and benevolent Manners of the Servants, as the Prudence and Hoſpitality of their Superiors.

And now, Is not ſuch a Mode of Obedience as this proper? — Pride and Stiffneſs in Servants will always

expose them to ill Treatment. A modest Demeanour, joined to a Readiness to execute the Master's Commands, is such an Indication of a good Mind and good Will to their Service, as naturally wins their Affection, and inclines them, in Return, to do them all the good Offices in their Power; and to make the Yoke of Servitude to sit light and easy. Whereas, the contrary Behaviour will always excite them to such Degrees of Rebuke and Correction, as perhaps they can very ill bear; and yet are obliged in Conscience to submit to, whether they are just or unjust: which is indeed frequently the Case; for as nothing is so apt to sour the Temper of the best Masters as Sullenness and Insolence in their Servants, so nothing is more apt to bring unjust Correction upon them; because it makes every thing they do, disagreeable, however right in itself; and urges the Master to lay-hold on all Opportunities and Pretences of subduing and mortifying that evil Spirit by the sharpest and severest Correction.

Whereas, on the other Hand, Humility and Meekness have the happiest Effects upon the Dispositions of all they deal with: they turn the Edge of the sharpest Rage; their yielding Softness abates their Violence, and subdues their Force. "A soft Answer turneth away Wrath; but grievous Words stir up Anger." Gentle and modest Replies soften the most hardened and obstinate Disposition. Modesty

Modeſty in a Servant, places all his Actions in the beſt Light; and inclines the moſt froward and perverſe Maſters to bear with their Infirmities, and to put the beſt Conſtruction upon all their Conduct.

And even as to themſelves, what do Servants get by doing their Duty grudgingly? They hurt themſelves as much as they do others. They waſte their Spirits more by the Frowardneſs of their Tempers than by the Labours of their Hands, and if they get their Wages, they miſs of that which an ingenuous Mind would conſider as his principal Reward, the Good-will of his Superiors.

There is indeed a Difference in People's natural Tempers, and all proper Allowance ſhould be made for that Timidity, Gloomineſs, and Reſerve, which is conſtitutional to ſome Perſons. But then Servants who are thus circumſtanced, ſhould endeavour to maſter their Tempers, by reaſoning with themſelves, and watching againſt every Expreſſion of theſe Ill-qualities, ſo diſguſting to all Obſervers. They ſhould thruſt gloomy Ideas as much as poſſible from their Minds, and endeavour to make their Situations as agreeable to themſelves as they can. They ſhould conſider how much they are obliged to contribute to the Comfort and Happineſs of all around them, and what Diſgrace the contrary Behaviour will bring on their Profeſſion.

Cheerfulneſs in Matters of Religion is of the laſt Importance. Whoever is an acceptable Servant of God, muſt be ſo out of Choice: he muſt love his Maſter and make his Honour and Intereſt his Object. It muſt be his Meat and Drink to do his Will, and conſider his Work as his Reward. Thus the Angels ſerve God: — and thus the Prophets and Apoſtles laboured with all their Might to perſuade others to ſerve him. And thus the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in the Days of his Fleſh, ſerved his Father. His Countenance was ſerene and eaſy, his Addreſs affable and courteous, and his Words ſoft and engaging. — But further,

This ready Obedience to the Will of your Maſters, is likewiſe ſtrictly enjoined in the Word of God, and you are allured to it by the moſt gracious Promiſes of divine Aſſiſtance in the Courſe of your Duty, and an ample Reward at the Cloſe of it. "Whatever ye do, therefore, do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto Men."

Thus good, thus profitable and happy, are they who act from "Singleneſs of Heart, fearing God." — "The Fear of God," in this, as in every other Inſtance, "is the Beginning of Wiſdom." Be obedient, therefore, to your Maſters, "knowing that whatſoever good thing any Man doth, the ſame ſhall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free."

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The Offices required of Servants are all of them good, fit and right in themselves, and truly commendable and praise-worthy. But it is possible they may not in some Instances, receive those Returns from Men which they deserve. Be that however as it may, they are assured that God, of his great Mercy, will not fail to reward them. So that all the Comforts of Religion in this Life, and all the Joys consequent upon it in another, are held up to their View as Arguments to perswade them to the faithful Discharge of their Duty. To the same Purpose the Apostle expresses himself, "knowing, that of the Lord ye shall receive the Reward of the Inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ." Let their Service be never so mean, painful, and laborious, yet if they perform it out of Conscience to God's Command, he esteems it as done to himself, and will hereafter bountifully reward them.

Sermon

SERMON CCCXCVII.

On the ſame Subject.

Duties and Motives, continued.

Coloſ. iii. 22. "Servants, obey in all things your "Maſters according to the Fleſh: not with Eye-"ſervice, as Men-pleaſers; but in Singleneſs of "Heart, fearing God."

Notwithſtanding the many Duties we have already adduced, as belonging to Servants, and the ſtrong Arguments by which we have ſupported them, both from Reaſon and Scripture; and the engaging Motives they have to practice them; Yet,

As, after all, we cannot expect to ſee Servants, no more than their Maſters, blameleſs; and foraſmuch as Maſters have a Right to reprove and correct their Servants for their Faults: (*) therefore a further Duty of Servants is to amend upon ſuch Reproof and Correction.

Servants muſt not think they have done enough, when they have liſtened calmly to their Maſter's Rebuke; for all this is to no Purpoſe, unleſs they amend by it. And therefore they are to obſerve, and to re-

(*) See Page 47.

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flect carefully upon the Reaſons and Circumſtances of their Conduct, whenever they are reproved; and make ſerious Reſolutions of more Care and Attention for the future. And,

Foraſmuch as the Buſineſs of moſt Servants lies within a very narrow Compaſs, the Sum of their Employment being a Train of the very ſame low Offices conſtantly repeated, with very little Variety; it is evident, that as there is but a very moderate Degree of Capacity required to enable them to know their Duty, ſo likewiſe as moderate a Degree of Care and Diligence will enable them to diſcharge it as they ought; and therefore, whatever Excuſe there may be for the firſt Commital of Faults, there can be none for the frequent Repetition of them, eſpecially after Correction; for even brute Beaſts will learn to ſhun thoſe Actions that are attended with Puniſhment, even againſt the Inſtinct of Nature: and therefore, for reaſonable Creatures to commit the ſame Faults to which they can have no natural Inſtinct, after frequent Rebuke and Correction, is in Truth to become more than brutal; to act even below the Beaſts that periſh. And therefore it is no Wonder, if the common End of ſuch incorrigible Creatures is utter Ruin and Deſtruction. The Maſter grows weary of Correction, and lets them go their own Way; and their own Way being, for the moſt Part, the

Way of Vice and Villany, leads to Infamy and Ruin. This is alſo God's Way of dealing with incorrigible Sinners: "whom he loveth, he chaſteneth;" but when Chaſtening hath no Effect for their Amendment, "he delivers them over to a reprobate Mind."

Two other Duties, of all Perſons indeed, but, in ſome Meaſure, peculiarly of Servants, are, Sobriety, without which they can neither be careful nor diligent, nor will be likely to continue juſt; and Chaſtity, the Want of which will produce all Manner of Diſorders and Miſchiefs in the Family to which they belong, and utter Ruin to themſelves.

Having thus gone thro with the Particulars propoſed: many and great are the Motives and Encouragements now to be offered.

The State of Servitude, it is true, is accounted humiliating and mean; but there are many Conſiderations to alleviate and make it eaſy; if not, indeed, to ſet it in a dubious Point, whether their Happineſs is not equal, if not greater than thoſe who ſupport them, and are, therefore, called their Maſters. (*)

It is incumbent upon you, therefore, as good Chriſtians to be content with the low Condition of Life in which it has pleaſed God to place you; and you will be content, if you conſider, that God governs the World; and that all his Appointments are Appoint-

(*) See Page 31.

ments

ments of the wiſeſt and beſt of all Beings. And therefore, whatever State of Life he aſſigns us, muſt be the very beſt that could be aſſigned us.

Had you been placed in a higher Station, how can you tell what Pride and Inſolence, what Vice and Villany you had been expoſed to, which might have ended in the Deſtruction both of Body and Soul? And therefore, inſtead of repining at your Condition, you are to bleſs God, who hath not led you into ſo great Temptations as Wealth, and Power, and Grandeur are, but delivered you from Evil.

If you ſuffer from a ſevere Maſter, conſider, that although you might not have deſerved Chaſtiſement at his Hand, yet you have deſerved that, and much more, at the Hand of God; and ſuch is the Inſtrument by which He is pleaſed to execute his Correction upon you. And this you know, that if, "when ye do well, and ſuffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God."

Conſider moreover, that although your Condition is ſubject to many Inconveniences, yet, in the midſt of theſe, it has one great and peculiar Advantage, that you are freed by it from ſome, if not all the great Anxieties of Life. For, What is all That, for which the Sons of Men toil and diſquiet themſelves in this Vale of Miſery, but a little Food, and Raiment, and a con-

venient Habitation? – and you have all these in your Master's Service, and thro his Care and Expence.

If Servants have more of the Labours of Life, they have less of the Cares: they are only concerned in one Matter, to do what lies before them; whilst others, (with MARTHA, in the Gospel) have their Minds "incumbered with many things." The Servants' whole Care is only to their Masters; whereas, it may be, their Masters must court and humour all they have to do with. Servants have generally themselves alone to provide for; their Masters have a whole Family to take-care of, to support, and educate. — Scarcity and Dearth affect not them. If public Mischiefs oppress a Nation, they feel but little of them, though even the Government itself be changed. (*) Their Contribution to the Support of the Public is but trifling; and are therefore less distressed than those who live in a higher Station. But,

What, above all, gives the great and distinguishing Advantage to your Condition, is, that as you have less to be anxious for in this World, you have less to be answerable for in the next. To you less is given, and of you, therefore, less is required. What are all the Power, and Wealth, and Dominion of this World, but so many great Stewardships, of which the Owners must give an Account to their great Lord and Master

(*) *Iniqua Dominum, aut Sortem mutat.* at

at the laſt Day? And what Man in his Senſes would wiſh to have a long and heavy Account to give at the great Day of Judgment? Do but imagine a mighty Potentate ſummoned together with his meaneſt Vaſſal, to the great Tribunal of God; and the Queſtion fairly put to him, What haſt thou done with all that Wealth and Power committed to thy Charge? "Give an Account of thy Stewardſhip." Alas! where is that mighty Man upon Earth, that could give clear and ſatisfactory Anſwers to theſe Queſtions? Who would have Wealth, who would have Power, who would have a great Eſtate, who would have an Empire, upon theſe Terms? Whereas, when the poor Servant is queſtioned; if he has been a good Man, his Accounts are ſhort, and his Anſwers are eaſy: Lord, I have ſerved thee, and been faithful to my Maſter; I have had but little, and I did my Diligence gladly, to give of that little.

Tho it is not poſſible for all Men to be great; (*) yet, what is infinitely more valuable, all Men may be honeſt, virtuous, and religious; all Men may live in God's Favour in this World, and be happy in the next. Your Recompence for being good Servants to Men, will be, that you ſhall become the Children of God.

He

(*) *Non cuivis Homini contingit adire Corinthum.*

Serm. CCCXCVII.

He will look upon you as his Sons. You ſhall be adopted into his Family, and made Heirs of his heavenly Kingdom; for "there is no Reſpect of Perſons with him—He regardeth the Rich no more than the Poor, being the ſame Lord over all." In his Eye there is no Diſtinction. "There is neither Bond nor Free—He that is called in the Lord, being a Servant, is the Lord's Free-man: likewiſe alſo, he that is called, being free, is Chriſt's Servant."

The higheſt Angels in Heaven are God's Miniſters and Meſſengers, and are glorious and happy in their Obedience: and the very meaneſt of the Sons of Men, if not wanting in the Duties of their preſent Station, whatever it be, ſhall be advanced to the ſame Likeneſs; for they will be "equal unto the Angels, and are the Children of God, being the Children of the Reſurrection." The loweſt Offices become the Steps of our higheſt Advancement. Every Station is holy, that is filled by a devout Perſon. He who doth "Service as unto the Lord," is as he that miniſtereth unto the Altar. Tho your Time and Hands are taken up, more, perhaps, than they ſhould be, by a hard Maſter, you have your Hearts and Affections free. Love God, and keep his Commandments, and your Lot is to be envied. "There is reſerved in Heaven for you an Inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

It

It is a comfortable Reflection, therefore, for Servants (however low their Condition appears in the Sight of Men,) that, in God's Regard, (who underſtands the true and juſt Value of his Creatures,) they are of equal Worth with the Great, the Rich, and the Noble. He has given them Bodies as beautiful and uſeful; Faculties of Mind as good; made them capable of being virtuous; has redeemed them with the ſame precious Blood of Chriſt; opened to them the ſame Gates of Heaven; and prepared for them the ſame Glory in that Kingdom of Bliſs.

As the State of Servitude is neceſſary by the Appointment of the wiſe Creator; and the World cannot be governed and maintained without it—It is therefore no Token of God's Diſpleaſure to any. "Hath not God, like the Potter, Power over the Clay?" who exerciſes his Wiſdom "over the ſame Lump, in making one Veſſel unto Honour, and another unto Diſhonour;" which, however, have all of them their ſeparate and diſtinct Uſe; and, together, make up the whole Ornament and Furniture of the Houſe. — So that we may reaſon exactly as St. Paul doth, reſpecting the different Offices of the Members of the Body, and their mutual Relations to each other: "For the "Body is not one Member, but many. If the Foot "ſhall ſay, Becauſe I am not the Hand, I am not of

"the Body; is it therefore not of the Body? And if "the Ear ſhall ſay, Becauſe I am not the Eye, I am "not of the Body; is it therefore not of the Body?

"If the whole Body were an Eye, where were the "Hearing? And if the whole were Hearing, where "were the Smelling?

"But now hath God ſet the Members, every one "of them in the Body, as it hath pleaſed him. And if "they were all one Member, where were the Body? "But now are they many Members, yet but one Body. "And the Eye cannot ſay unto the Hand, I have no "need of thee: nor again, the Head to the Feet, I have "no need of you. Nay, much more, thoſe Members of "the Body, which ſeem to be more feeble, are neceſſa-"ry. And thoſe Members of the Body, which we think "leſs honourable, upon theſe we beſtow more abun-"dant Honour; and our uncomely Parts have more "abundant Comelineſs. For our comely Parts have no "need: but God hath tempered the Body together, "having given more abundant Honour to that Part "which lacked: that there might be no Schiſm in the "Body; but that the Members ſhould have the ſame "Care one for another. And whether one Member "ſuffer, all the Members ſuffer with it; or one Mem-"ber be honoured, all the Members rejoice with it. "Now ye are the Body of Chriſt, and Members in "par-

"particular:" and Happineſs is ſo equally balanced in either State, that their own Miſconduct only can make them miſerable.

"Art thou called, then, being a Servant? Care not for it: but if thou mayeſt be free, uſe it rather." (*)

God, in no Ways, forbids Men to uſe every honeſt Means to make themſelves free as ſoon as they can, but only commands them, whilſt they are in it, to behave as becomes their Condition, with Obedience, Diligence and Induſtry, with Submiſſion and Humility, with Truth and Juſtice, Faithfulneſs and Honeſty.

It is the Happineſs of Servants, and ought with Gratitude to be remembered by them, that they have better and more frequent Opportunities of recommending themſelves to God, than their Superiors.

Honeſty, Frugality, Temperance, Faithfulneſs and Humility (Virtues which they are daily called on to exerciſe) are more particularly adapted to their Stations and

(*) When Servants judge that they can be treated with more Kindneſs, or receive a better Recompence from a new Maſter, or in another Station, they are at Liberty to try. The Counſels ſuggeſted by Prudence, may be followed with Innocence. Only they ſhould be careful, that their Changes be not too frequent; eſpecially, if not manifeſtly to their Advantage; leſt by the Repetition of that Practice, they gain to themſelves the Character of Unſtableneſs, and conſequently be avoided of all Men. Add to this the Loſſes it muſt occaſion during the intermediate Spaces of Employ, and Expences in thoſe Times. Serm. CCCXCVII.

and Circumſtances in Life: — what we cannot eaſily ſubſiſt without, we are readily induced to acquire.

Is it not, then, a peculiar Privilege which Servants enjoy, that what is their Duty, is withal, moſt apparently, their Intereſt alſo; and that which conſtitutes their preſent Happineſs, will, at the ſame Time, enſure their future Felicity.

If thou be a Servant, then, deal juſtly by thy Maſter; let his Buſineſs be thy Care, and his Welfare thy Content; when commanded, be obedient; when not commanded, be provident; let Diligence be thy Credit, and Faithfulneſs thy Crown.

To Conclude, A Time, we know, will come, (and it cannot be far from every one of us,) when we muſt all, once more, be upon a Level; when all Rank and Degree ſhall ceaſe, and Diſtinction vaniſh, except ſuch as ſhall be cauſed by Eminence in Goodneſs, at the final Conſummation of all things.

Him the Grave we ſhall be equal; where "the Wicked will ceaſe from troubling, and the weary are at Reſt: where the Priſoners reſt together, and hear not the Voice of the Oppreſſor." From that Place, He that created all, will call-forth his Creatures, "high and low, rich and poor, one with another." There ſhall "the Servant be a Servant no more;" God, the great Deliverer, will ſhake-off our Chains, and break our Bonds

aſunder; then ſhall thoſe, whoſe low and hard Condition in this Life, ſubjected them to Toil and Labour, receive the Reward of Reſt and Tranquility. If they have performed their Duty in that Station which God allotted them, they ſhall receive the Inheritance which He hath promiſed them: – They who have groaned under the Hand of Tyranny and Oppreſſion, ſhall enjoy the Bleſſings of Freedom and Indulgence. As they have been ſuperior to their Maſters in Goodneſs, and in all the Virtues of a Chriſtian Life, they will be rewarded accordingly, and maintain that Superiority to all Eternity. Thoſe who have been the Servants of Men, ſhall become the Sons of God; they ſhall become the Servants of that beſt and kindeſt Maſter, who will lay no harſh Commands upon them, nor require any unreaſonable or unpleaſing Service; but inſtead of burthening them with new Taſks, will only recompenſe them for what they have already performed; A Maſter, who, when they approach his Throne with Humility, will receive them with the kindeſt Salutation, and with the tendereſt Endearments; who will crown all their Wiſhes, and ſatisfy all their Deſires, ſaying unto them: "Well done good and faithful Servants, ye have been faithful over a few things, I will make you Rulers over many things; enter ye into the Joy of your Lord."

SERMON CCCXCVIII.

The Duty of Maſters.

Coloſ. iv. 1. "Maſters, give unto your Servants "that which is juſt and equal, knowing that ye "alſo have a Maſter in Heaven."

The Duties of Servants to their Maſters having been at large explained and enforced, we are now to conſider thoſe of Maſters to their Servants. This is a Subject of as great Importance as the former, for the Obligations and Intereſts of both Parties are mutual: and indeed, after all the Pains that have been taken with Servants, the Succeſs of our Endeavours depends not a litule upon the prudent, reſolute, and good-natured Behaviour of Maſters towards them. — In explaining the Text we are to conſider,

First, The Perſons addreſſed:

Secondly, The Duties enjoined: and,

Thirdly, The Arguments with which they are to be enforced.

First, The Perſons addreſſed are Maſters.

Maſters here are to be conſidered, agreeably to what

was

was obſerved in a former Diſcourſe reſpecting Servants, either as claiming Property in their Servants, or as having an Authority over them that was the Reſult of mutual Compact. Theſe are called Maſters "according to the Fleſh," to remind both them and their Servants of the great God; who, in the Text, is ſaid to be their "Maſter in Heaven." So Servants are taught to have Regard to the divine Authority in the Obedience they tender to their Maſters: and Maſters, on the other Hand, are taught to exerciſe Humanity and Condeſcenſion to their Servants. Although they are their Superiors in Regard of Condition, they are upon an Equality with them in Regard of Nature. And whatever Authority they claim over their Bodies, that Authority cannot extend to their nobler Part, the Soul. They are and can be only Maſters "according to the Fleſh."

Secondly, We are next to conſider the Duties enjoined on Maſters.

Theſe are all included in the general Ideas of Juſtice and Equity; that is, acting upon the ſame Principles of Equity and Benevolence, as thoſe on which Servants are required to act in their Obedience to them. If it is their Duty to be faithful, honeſt, and juſt, it is the Duty of Maſters to be ſo too. If the latter are not to be injured in their Perſons, Characters, or Property, ſo neither are the former. And the Conſidera-

tion more directly held up to their View, engaging to this Juſtice and Equity, is that of their "knowing that they have alſo a Maſter in Heaven." All Ranks of Men are alike Servants of the great God, and amenable to him; and it is moſt certain that he is ſtrictly juſt, and will not ſhew a partial Regard to any on Account of the ſuperior Stations they hold in Life. This they ſhould remember; and ſo charge it upon themſelves, as to act, at all Times, according to the ſtrict Rules of "JUSTICE and EQUITY."

It is not indeed neceſſary, that when two or more Epithets of nearly the ſame Senſe and Signification are attributed to one and the ſame Thing and Perſon, there ſhould be a different Senſe ſought for each: the Scriptures uſe a great many Words, not barely to ſignify the ſame thing; but to ſignify it with more Force, and to make the deeper Impreſſion on the Mind of the Reader.

But, if there be any Difference intended by the Apoſtle, it may be reaſonable to think that when Maſters are bidden to be juſt, or to "give that which is JUST to their Servants," they are commanded to give them that which is theirs by Contract and Agreement – and, when they are to give them that which is "EQUAL," they are to deal fairly with them, honeſtly and kindly, to give them that which is due in Reaſon and Conſci-

ence,

ence, altho they have not ſo contracted formally with them. — So that, by "JUST and EQUAL," we are doubtleſs to underſtand all the various Parts of a Maſter's Duty to his Servant, which Circumſtance, Merit, or Occaſion, may at any Time require of him. — In a Word, not only Juſtice, in a ſtrict Senſe; but Maintenance and Protection, Indulgence and Tenderneſs, Advice and Inſtruction, Pardon and Forgiveneſs.

"Maſters, give unto your Servants that which is juſt and equal, knowing that ye alſo have a Maſter in Heaven."

The Text thus explained, we proceed to a more full Diſcuſſion of the Subject before us. But, previous to a particular Enumeration of the Duties required of Maſters, let us ſpend a few Moments in ſhewing the great Importance of their taking every proper Meaſure to procure to themſelves good Servants, and to ſecure their Reverence and Affection. Theſe Points, once gained, will have a conſiderable Effect to facilitate the ſeveral Duties to be hereafter recommended.

1ſt. The firſt Duty of Maſters, is a prudent Care in the Choice of Servants. This is a Concern of great Moment, on which the Comfort and Happineſs, or the Trouble and Misery of a Family doth much depend, and therefore People are almoſt generally agreed in it. What Man in his Senſes would entruſt the Guidance,

of his Affairs to one void of all Principle? would like to be ſerved by a Perſon whoſe Word is not to be relied on? or ſuffer his Houſe to become an Aſylum for Villains and Aſſaſſins? The greateſt Evils are to be apprehended from Inattention to theſe Matters. Your Subſtance may be plundered, your Houſe conſumed, your Children ruined, and yourſelves murdered. The Character therefore of Servants ſhould be well looked into, and if they are even ſuſpicious, it is a ſufficient Reaſon why we ſhould not admit them under our Roof.

The Qualifications of a Servant are, Ability to diſcharge the Duties of his Place, an upright Conſcience, and Piety towards God; the laſt is of great Importance, tho too little regarded; for few enquire about their Servants' Principles in Religion, provided they are ſtrong and able. But this is very imprudent and faulty. Maſters ſhould never think Servants fit for their Service, unleſs they are careful to worſhip that God whom both are bound to ſerve and obey.

Wicked Servants will corrupt a whole Family; their bad Examples will ſoon tempt others to be as corrupt as themſelves. To this may be imputed that general Profaneneſs ſo prevalent in moſt Families, eſpecially where there are numerous Servants. Children, by converſing with ſuch, imbibe the firſt Rudiments of Vice; to learn

learn the firſt Syllables of Oaths, and Obſcenity; and who, for their eaſy Docility and ready Aptneſs therein, are applauded by theſe impious Wretches. (*) Such Servants are the Peſts of Mankind, as they corrupt thoſe in their Youth, who may afterwards have an Influence on the State and Common-wealth, and thereby render them a Shame to their Families, and a Curſe to the Kingdom. For, where Servants are wicked, Children are more influenced by their Flattery and Examples, than by the Authority and Command of the Parents. It is, therefore, the Wiſdom and Concern of Maſters to chuſe ſuch Servants as know their Duty, and make Conſcience of performing it; in whoſe Integrity and Fidelity they may repoſe themſelves in Safety. (‡)

2dly, It ſhould be the next Care of Maſters, when they have obtained good Servants, to eſtabliſh in their Breaſts a due Reverence for their Authority.

Without this it will be impoſſible that the one ſhould govern, or the other ſerve aright. No Authority can avail that is held in Contempt: its Exertions will be feeble, and its Effect nugatory. A Maſter has a Right to command, and a Servant ſhould know it, and know too that he is reſolved to aſſert it. Property, Rank and Conſent give Power. But of what Uſe is Power, if

(*) See Page 69, 70.

(‡) See holy David's Reſolution in this Caſe, for himſelf, and in the Choice of his Servants; in the 101ſt. Pſalm.

if not applied to the Purpoſe for which it was given? If, through Puſillanimity, Ill-breeding, or Want of Senſe, Maſters ſuffer all Idea of their Superiority to be obliterated from the Minds of their Servants, is it to be wondered that ſuch Servants grow familiar with them, that this Familiarity breeds Pertneſs and Confidence, that theſe are followed with Obſtinacy and Diſobedience, and ſo all the Ends of their Office, as Servants, are defeated? It can ſcarce be otherwiſe. Poſſeſſing this Power, therefore, Maſters ſhould have Spirit to claim it, particularly when Servants enter their Families. (*) This will fix ſuch Impreſſions of Humility, Fear, and Reverence, upon their Minds, as will have the moſt important Effect to guard them againſt Indecency, Idleneſs, and Neglect. They will not dare to treat their Maſter's Orders with Indifference, or by a confident Behaviour to put them to the bluſh before Strangers. — But,

By what Kind of Deportment are Maſters to ſecure to themſelves ſuch Reſpect from their Servants? Not by aſſuming a Power they have no Right to. Not by arrogating the Authority of a haughty Deſpot. Not by accuſtoming themſelves to a proud, ſupercilious, diſtant Carriage. We mean nothing of this Kind. Such a Behaviour is carrying the Matter to an Extreme

(*) *Principiis obſta, ſerò Medicina paratur*
Cùm Mala per longas convaluêre Moras.

as pernicious, as the contrary. No; what we mean is a Propriety and Dignity of Conduct, resulting from a just Sense of their Superiority. (*) How do some Heads of Families let themselves down in the Opinion of their Servants, by allowing them the like Familiarity they do their Children or their particular Friends! Can this be right? Have Masters reason to expect their Domestics will revere them, if no Attention is paid to the natural and proper Forms, which the common Sense and Custom of all Nations have adopted? If, for Instance, they allow them to be talkative, to answer again, to take-place by their Side, or to be covered

(*) St. Paul, in delivering the Duties which Superiors owe to their Inferiors, is careful to preserve the Decorum of Things, and generally uses such Terms as seem to imply, that the Discharge of their Part is a Matter of more Grace and Favour, rather than of Debt and Justice. "Rulers are not a Terror to good Works, but to the evil." — "Husbands, love your Wives." — "Fathers, provoke not your Children to Wrath." — "Masters, give unto your Servants that which is just and equal." Whereas, to all Inferiors, he speaks in a commanding, and louder Strain; "Let every Soul be subject to the higher Powers." — "Wives, submit yourselves to your own Husbands." — "Children, obey your Parents in all things." and "Servants, obey your Masters in all things."

But yet, it would be a wrong Inference, for any to draw from hence, that Inferiors are bound to their Duty more firmly than Superiors to their's: no; but only that the Nature of their several Duties requires a different Carriage in the Manner of discharging it, and which indeed, sometimes, becomes a considerable Part of it.

ed in their Preſence; can they wonder that their Servants quickly forget their Character and Station, and ſo become indiſpoſed to their Duty.

To juſtify ſuch Imprudence on the Ground of Humility and Condeſcenſion, is Weakneſs to the laſt Degree, if not abſolutely criminal. Our Lord himſelf condemns it, when he ſays in One of his Diſcourſes, "Which of you having a Servant plowing or feeding Cattle, will ſay unto him by and by, when he is come from the Field, Go and ſit down to Meat; and will not rather ſay unto him, Make ready wherewith I may ſup, and gird thyſelf, and ſerve me, till I have eaten and drunken: afterwards thou ſhalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that Servant becauſe he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not."

If a Maſter's Behaviour is mean and indiſcreet, Servants will grow familiar and contemptuous. There ſhould, therefore, be ſuch a Mixture of Mildneſs with Gravity, of Love with Authority, as that the Servants ſhould be compelled and inclined to Obedience. Power may enforce Submiſſion, but only Reaſon and Gravity can render Maſters venerable. If a Maſter's Demeanour be grave and awful, his very Countenance will beget Reverence and Attention. — But further,

The Commands of Maſters ſhould be lawful, for Servants have a ſupreme Lord and Maſter in Heaven whom

whom they must fear and obey. A Servant is obliged to work, but not to lye, steal, or cheat for a Master; they must "obey God rather than Men." (*)

He that commands evil things, tho he may be obeyed, yet will not be respected: for even Sinners, however they may commit Sin, yet approve not of it in their own Minds, "their Consciences in the mean while accuse them:" such, therefore, as command them to it, must be equally vile in their Eyes. Masters, then, should command with Moderation and Justice, if they mean to be respected. But further,

3dly, They should be equally careful to secure to themselves the cordial Affection of their Servants.

As to God, Love is of as much Consequence to influence and regulate our Obedience to him as Reverence. No One that does not affectionately esteem that great Being, will render him acceptable and effectual Service. Such is the Case with Respect to Servants. If they have no cordial Attachment to their Masters, but possess only the abject Awe and Reverence of Slaves, however they may do what they are bid, they will not do it well; and their Masters will find their Business in governing them to be very arduous indeed. They must, in such Case, have their Eye perpetually upon them, must issue their Orders on every Matter with

(*) See this Case spoken to, Page 42, &c.

with a ſevere and peremptory Tone, and frequently endure the painful Jealouſy of Undutifulneſs and Infidelity. On the contrary, If our Servants love as well as reverence us; they will not only obey our Commands, but obey them cheerfully. They will make our Intereſts their own, and by aiming to pleaſe, will relieve us of many Anxieties and Exertions, which would otherwiſe be unavoidable. This, therefore, ſhould be an Object with the Heads of Families. The ſecuring this Point, as well as the two former, ſhould engage their ſteady Attention, eſpecially when Servants firſt enter their Houſes.

But how is this to be done? Not by indecent Familiarity or mean Submiſſion, much leſs inſincere Pretences; but by a humane, candid, generous, friendly Behaviour towards them. Satisfied of the Characters of their Servants when they hire them, and feeling themſelves well affected towards them as honeſt, induſtrious, and good-natured, and eſpecially as religious Perſons, if ſuch they are; Maſters ſhould endeavour to convince them that they are their Friends, and mean to do them all the good that lies in their Power. And in the full Perſuaſion of this kind Diſpoſition toward them, they ſhould take Pains, by all proper Means, to confirm them, ſuch as Condeſcenſion, Affability, good-natured Language, pleaſant Countenances, and other

more

more ſubſtantial Tokens of Approbation. This, no Doubt, is their Duty and Intereſt, and One would wonder that People are not generally ſenſible of it.

Having thus laid the Foundation of Domeſtic Government, in the ſecure Poſſeſſion of the Character, Reverence and Affection of our Servants, we ſhall be enabled the more eaſily to rear the Superſtructure, [viz.] the further Duty of Maſters, in the proper Arrangement of domeſtic Affairs, and the Inſtructions neceſſary reſpecting them.

Method and Punctuality are of Importance to the right conducting and expediting all civil Affairs. So here. Every One in the Houſe ſhould have his proper Office aſſigned him. A fit Time ſhould be allotted for each Duty. The Day for Work, and the Night for Reſt. The early Hours of the Morning ſhould not be waſted in Sloth. Buſineſs ſhould be forwarded, and That not put-off to a late Seaſon which ought to be done immediately. Each Service ſhould ſucceed the other in regular Order, and the Department of one Servant not claſh with the Duty of another.

Matters thus adjuſted in a Family, all will go on with Eaſe, Harmony, and Succeſs. Confuſion will be avoided. Waſte will be prevented. Much will be done in a little Time. A good Underſtanding will

be preſerved through the Houſe. And Cheerfulneſs will be ſeen in every Countenance. — Now,

The diſpoſing Matters in ſuch Manner, is a Duty lying upon the Heads of Families. They ſhould therefore ſummon together all the Prudence, Good-nature, and Reſolution they are Maſters of, in Order to the compaſſing theſe Objects. More depends upon this than ſome may at firſt View imagine.

Inattention to domeſtic Affairs, either through Sloth or Affectation of Superiority to theſe low Concerns, as ſome may ſtyle them, has proved the Ruin of many Families. Indeed, this is an Evil, which, in the preſent Age of Diſſipation, calls loudly for a Reform. Can any thing be more abſurd than for the Miſtreſs of the Houſe to conſider what is her proper Buſineſs as beneath her? By ſuch a Conduct ſhe diſgraces her Underſtanding, as well as injures her Family. Would we could perſuade ſuch inconſiderate People to oppoſe to their own Character that of the virtuous Woman by Solomon! (*) Doubtleſs, the Contraſt would put them out of Humour with themſelves, and quickly recover them to their Senſes. But to return. As

(*) Prov. xxxi, 10 — 28. Perſons in the higheſt Stations, and who have been fam'd for their good Senſe, as well as their ſuperior Rank, have not deemed it beneath them to attend to the Affairs of their Families, and to exerciſe their Ingenuity in ſome profitable or curious Employ. Auguſtus prided himſelf in wearing the Garments ſpun

As the general Outlines of their Duty are to be pointed out to them, so, more particularly, Servants are to have particular Instructions what is to be done, and how to do it. This is necessary to our own Satisfaction, and to their Improvement. How can we expect to be pleased, if we do not give them proper Directions to this End? And indeed, if the Heads of Families, in both Departments, do not look properly into Affairs, their Servants will get a contemptible Idea of their Understandings, and so will be under a Temptation to slight their Business, if not wholly neglect it.

And it will not be a sufficient Excuse to a Stranger, if things are ill-done, and the House in Disorder, that you have bad Servants. For, it will be naturally suspected, either that thro your Imprudence, you have not a proper Command over them, or that you do not understand your own Affairs. Besides, Common Justice to Servants requires that they should be properly taught, in Order to their becoming expert and notable. If you will not guide and direct them, how can they improve? This

(*) Thus, Homer describes Helen employed in the Loom; spun by Livia: and Homer describes Helen employed in the Loom; in the Palace of her Father Priam.

Her in the Palace, at her Loom she found;
The golden Web her own sad Story crown'd.
(The Trojan Wars that work'd. Pope.)

See Vol. xiii. Page 223, 224. Serm. CCCXCVIII.

This it shews especially the Duty of Masters to such Servants as are entrusted to their Care, and whom they have covenanted to instruct in particular Occupations and Professions in Life. Neglect in these Instances is not only imprudent, but highly criminal. The Idea of Influence, as well as Authority, is implied in the Character of a Master.

These Preliminaries, thus stated, we proceed to the more direct Duty of Masters, as enjoined in the Text. "Masters, give unto your Servants that which is just and equal." And First,

Masters are to do Justice to their Servants; and this Justice consists in two Points; 1st. In not exacting immoderate and unreasonable Labour of them; and, 2dly, In an adequate Recompence for their Labour.

Care should be taken that no more is required of Servants than they are equal to, and that we are gentle in our Deportment towards them.

Masters must be moderate in their Commands, and not oppress their Servants with too hard and constant Employ, beyond their Strength and Ability.

Tho' the Servant's Time and Labour are the Master's, yet they are to be exacted with Equity and Reason. (*) They, therefore, are greatly to Blame, who have

(*) *Et Modus in Rebus, sunt certi denique Fines,*
Quos ultrà, citràque nequit consistere rectum.

have no Consideration of their Servants; who never think they do enough, but are continually charging them with New Tasks, without Rest or Intermission; This is not dealing "justly" with them.

To lay Burdens on them which they have not Strength to bear, is cruel. To demand Services of them they are not competent to, and for which they were not hired, is unjust. Yea, to expect absolute Perfection of them in the particular Department they undertake, is unreasonable. Their Understandings, Abilities, and natural Tempers should be consulted, and all proper Allowances made for little Failures, and Oversights. We should put ourselves in their Place, and do unto them as we would have them, if they were our Masters, do unto us; not like those cruel Egyptian Task-masters, who, as the Text expresses it, "made the Children of Israel to serve with Rigour, and made their Lives bitter with hard Bondage;" and at last proceeded to that Extremity of Cruelty against them, that they exacted the same hard Measure of Work from them, without allowing them the Materials necessary to the Performance of it.

"A righteous Man (saith Solomon) regardeth the Life of his Beast; but the tender Mercies of the Wicked are cruel." A Man that hath any Degree of Goodness or Humanity, hath Compassion for the

Beasts that perish; This is the Conduct of the Righteous; "but the tender Mercies of the Wicked are cruel." And indeed there cannot possibly be a surer Indication of abandoned Corruption, of a Disposition depraved to the last Degree, than an hardened Cruelty to those that are under our Power! for he that has put off Mercy, the noblest, the loveliest Likeness of God, must, of Necessity, put off all Virtue and Goodness also. But let such Creatures remember, that there is a God, who heareth the Voice of the "Poor, and the oppressed, when they cry unto him," as he did the distressed Israelites, when they groaned under their Bondage; there is a God that will visit their Cruelty, as he did the Cruelty of those merciless Task-masters, with signal Judgments, and severe Vengeance.

It is a received Opinion, we know, among many Servants, that they are not to cease from their Toil in the Presence of their Masters: but this no Constitution can bear: and if, at any Time, the Necessity of their Affairs requires uncommon Labour and Application at the Hands of their Servants, it is their Duty to devise, and contrive, all possible Relief and Refreshment for them under it, as well as to allow them double Relaxation after it. A State of Servitude is a State wretched enough, in its best Circumstances; and, therefore, a good Man should endeavour to lighten the Burden,

and

and instead of adding to the Calamities of Life, should make it his Study, by all possible Methods, to ease and relieve them, to the utmost of his Power.

This was one Occasion of the Institution of the Sabbath to the Jews, that Servants might be relieved, and not consume a miserable Life in constant hard Labour; "that thy Man-servant and thy Maid-servant may rest as well as thou."

Humanity and Good-nature are indispensible Qualities in those who would govern their Families well. The Want of these will disgust in Servants, and their Tempers being soured they will neglect their Business, or however not do it as it should be done.

A certain Sweetness and Affability, therefore, should accompany our Instructions & Commands. This is an Art which some have acquired in a very high Degree, and the Effect is so considerable that all about them are happy, and their Friends who visit them become Shearers in their Felicity.

Such Deportment in the Heads of Families hath the Sanction not only of good Sense and Prudence, but of Scripture also.

By the Law of Moses, Masters are expressly forbid "to rule their Servants with Rigour." The Language of the Text is, – "Masters, give unto your Servants that which just and equal: remembering that ye also

have a Maſter in Heaven." — When we remember that "we have a Maſter in Heaven," how can we avoid expatiating a Moment on the Mildneſs and Gentleneſs of his Conduct, as a Maſter, towards us! How does He bear not only with our Inadvertencies and Failings, but with our Undutifulneſs, Perverſeneſs and Rebellion! Had he treated us with the Rigour ſome Maſters treat their Servants, we had long ſince been diſmiſſed his Service, and been wretched and miſerable. On the contrary, He is patient and long-ſuffering, He pities and pardons us, He takes every lenient Meaſure to ſoften our ſtubborn Tempers, and to conciliate our Affections to his Service. Let us, then, be ambitious of imitating him, and thereby convince our Servants that we are HIS Servants indeed. But,

If Examples of an inferior Kind, by coming nearer our own Standard, will have a more direct Effect, we have many in Scripture. What an excellent Maſter was Abraham! When he had Occaſion to ſend the eldeſt Servant of his Houſe upon a Buſineſs of Importance, he did not ſay, with the Pride and Haughtineſs of an Eaſtern Lord, 'See thou do this,' but with all the Softneſs that Religion, as well as good Senſe, inſpires, "I pray thee do ſo and ſo."

What a ſenſible, courteous, good-natured Miſtreſs was Abigail! how eaſy of Acceſs to her Servants!

And

And how readily did they obey her Commands! Such was her Character. And if Shades will enliven a Picture, the Churliſhneſs of her Huſband Nabal will throw a Luſtre upon the Prudence and Gentleneſs for which ſhe was ſo remarkable. Like a Wretch as he was, he treats the Servants of David, who came to him in a peaceable and reſpectful Manner, with the moſt abuſive Language; "Who is David? And who is the Son of Jeſſe? There be many Servants now-a-Days that break away every Man from his Maſter?" And his own Domeſtics, who had no Doubt ſuffered enough from his rude Behaviour, are obliged to complain to their Miſtreſs of this ill-timed Inhoſpitality and brutiſh Ill-mannerlineſs of their Maſter. Other Inſtances might be mentioned, but theſe will ſuffice. (*)

(*) See the Injuſtice and Abſurdity of this Conduct more largely ſpoken to, in Vol. ix. Page 175 — 180

Sermon

SERMON CCCXCIX.

The Duty of Maſters, continued.

Coloſ. iv. 1. "Maſters, give unto your Servants "that which is juſt and equal, knowing that ye "alſo have a Maſter in Heaven."

In the preceding Diſcourſe, previous to a particular Enumeration of the Duties required of Maſters, we have ſhewn the great Importance of their taking every proper Meaſure to obtain the Character, and to ſecure the Reverence and Affection of their Servants. — After which, we conſidered the Duty of Maſters, in Reference to the Civil Affairs of their Servants, in the regular Arrangement of the ſeveral Buſineſſes of the Houſe; and particularly inſtructing Servants what is to be done, and how to do it. — After this, we proceeded to the immediate Duties enjoined in the Text, of Maſters giving unto their Servants that which is juſt and equal.

By JUST and EQUAL, we are to underſtand all the various Parts of a Maſter's Duty to his Servant, which Circumſtance, Merit, or Occaſion, may at any Time require of him.

As

As to the first of these, JUSTICE, we considered it, in Reference to the present Subject, as consisting of two Points, 1st. In not exacting immoderate and unreasonable Labour of their Servants: and 2dly, In an adequate Recompence for their Labour.

The first of these we have already considered, with the proper Deportment of Masters, in exacting the same. We proceed therefore,

2dly, To the adequate Recompence due to Servants for their Labour. And, in this Idea we include Protection, Maintenance, Wages, and Character.

They who serve us have no Doubt a Right to our Protection. When they enter our House they intrust their Persons, their Reputation, and, in a Sense, all their Interests to our Care. Their Interests, therefore, we should consider as our own. Every Injury done them, especially when incurred by the faithful Discharge of their Duty, we should look upon as offered to ourselves. Their Grievances we should redress, and to the utmost of our Power defend them against all the Evils to which they are liable. "If I did despise, says Job, the Cause of my Man-servant, or of my Maid-servant, when they contended with me: what shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?" They who can be inattentive to the Safety, Repose, and Happiness of their Servants, are void of Justice and Humanity, and not a

little defective in Policy. Equity demands, that thoſe who defend, aſſiſt, and ſerve us, ſhould enjoy the Benefit of our Patronage: and common Senſe teaches, that Indifference on our Parts towards them, will be likely to beget Indifference on theirs towards us.

Maſters are admoniſhed by St. Paul, "to do the ſame things" unto their Servants, that their Servants are required to do unto them. If therefore we would have them defend our Perſons, our Characters, our Habitations, and our Property, we ſhould, with the like Zeal, defend theirs; and the rather, as their inferior Station renders them in a Manner helpleſs, and therefore the fitter Objects of the Attention and Regard of thoſe who have it in their Power to help them.

2dly, Maintenance, to which they have an unqueſtionable Right. How can they do their Duty, if they have not Health, Strength and Spirits to enable them properly to do it? And how are theſe to be acquired, if a ſeaſonable Supply of Food, Raiment, and Reſt, is denied them? Theſe we agree to give them, or to put it in their Power to procure, when they enter our Service: and to withhold them is equally unjuſt and fooliſh. What horrid Inhumanity to grudge the Neceſſaries of Life to thoſe who prepare for us the Conveniencies of it! What wretched Avarice to collect Wealth from the ſcanty Tables of our Domeſtics!

A

A Kind of Parſimony this that wants a Name for it. A Man of Spirit would rather ſuffer any Reproach than be upbraided with the meagre Countenances of his Servants: rather periſh in Obſcurity, than ſee Famine ſtalking about his Houſe, while he poſſeſſes the Means of driving the Spectre from it.

It is not, however, Luxury we mean to recommend: that is an Extreme as dangerous the other Way. No conſiderate Servants will expect to have their Tables ſpread with Delicacies: but plain and wholeſome Food they ought to have. A Plenty, with a hearty Welcome. (*)

3dly, The next Point of Juſtice that we owe to Servants is, to pay them their Wages honeſtly.

Nothing can be more ſelf-evident, than that thoſe who contribute, in a great Meaſure, to our Eaſe and Happineſs, have an indiſputable Title to a Reward for it from us: — The Obligation, indeed, is mutual; each Party is obliged to perform his Part of the Contract, upon which the Relation ſtands; and conſequently a Maſter is highly UNJUST, who keeps back (without reaſonable Cauſe) from the Hire of his Servant. "Maſters," (ſays the Text) "give unto your Servants that which is juſt and equal, knowing that ye alſo have a Maſter in Heaven."

If

(*) See Page 83.

If Justice be rightly defined, "a Virtue that gives every one what of Right belongs to him," the Virtue is never more itself, is never practised in greater Perfection, than when it is employed in Payments of this Kind; for if the Price of Servitude be not a Right, what is? If a Man hath not a just Claim to what he has earned by the Sweat of his Brow, there is no such thing as a just Claim in the World. And yet it is but too notorious, that many are so regardless of Justice, as well as Humanity, in this Point, that they do not scruple, first, to screw down their Servants' Wages to a poor Pittance, and then most shamefully defraud them of that Pittance. Little regarding the solemn Commands of God to the contrary, and the just Judgments he has denounced against this cruel Injustice. Jacob served Laban faithfully, and with all his Might, as he expresses it: yet Laban dealt deceitfully with him, and changed his Wages ten Times. God, however, suffered not Laban to hurt him: but on the contrary, by an extraordinary Interposition, took away his Wealth from him, and gave it to Jacob; so at once rewarding the Servant's Integrity, and punishing the Master's Infidelity.

The Law of Moses was particularly attentive to this Matter. "The Wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all Night until the Morning." And again, "Thou shalt not oppress an hired Servant, that is

is poor and needy; at his Day ſhalt thou give him his Hire; neither ſhall the Sun go down upon it, leſt he cry againſt thee unto the Lord, and it be a Sin unto thee." Here we ſee, that we ſhould be ſo far from defrauding our Servants of their Hire, that we are not to withhold the Payment of it, even for one Day; for, as the Text ſaith, "he is poor, and ſetteth his Heart upon it." We cannot tell how ſtrongly his Neceſſities may call for it that Moment; nor can we tell how much he may ſuffer for Want of it; it is a Trifle to us, but it is his All. It is the Price of his Labour, through many long and anxious Hours, bearing the Burden and Heat of the Day; and, therefore, "he ſetteth his Heart upon it." (*)

A Woe is denounced by the Prophet Jeremiah on him "that uſeth his Neighbour's Service without Wages,

(*) Oppreſſing the Labourer in his Hire, however this be done, whether by defrauding him, or delaying Payment, or ſcrewing him down to ſuch a miſerable Price as will not afford him the common Comforts of Life, or paying him in Goods, which he muſt ſell at half Value; all theſe, the laſt of theſe eſpecially, is a crying Sin, and one of the cruelleſt Oppreſſions that can be; and, therefore, it is no Wonder, that God, by his Prophet, denounces a ſpeedy Vengeance againſt it; "I will come near to you to Judgment, ſaith the Lord (Malachi iii. 5.), and I will be a ſwift Witneſs againſt the Sorcerers, and againſt the Adulterers, and againſt falſe Swearers, and againſt thoſe that oppreſs the Hireling in his Wages."

ges, and giveth him not for his Work." And the Apoſtle James expoſes in the ſtrongeſt Terms the Avarice and Brutality of thoſe wretched Maſters, who "kept back by Fraud the Hire of the Labourers, who reaped down their Fields;" telling them that "the Cries of the Oppreſſed had entered into the Ears of the Lord of Sabaoth."

It is the ſame with Regard to Food and Raiment, with any Profit or Conveniency whatever, that the Servant hath contracted for; It is in Juſtice due to him, when he hath earned it, and muſt, therefore, not be withheld from him: and his Inability of recovering it, by Might, or Law, makes it not leſs his Due, than if he were actually poſſeſſed of it. And, the Injuſtice of detaining from Inferiors, weak and helpleſs, is raiſed and aggravated by the Inſolence and Unmercifulneſs that are joined with it. Indeed,

Nothing can betray a worſe Mind than to oppreſs the Weak and Helpleſs, either becauſe they are ignorant of the Means of recovering their Dues, or unable to go thro, or bear the Charge of doing it: — This is to take Advantage of their Weakneſs, a "robbing of the Poor becauſe they are poor;" which ought much rather to excite our Pity and Compaſſion, and move us to become their Friends, inſtead of Enemies & Oppreſſors. We ſhould, certainly, if we had but a moderate De-

gree

gree of Good-nature, joined to common Honesty, we should be so far from oppressing the Hireling, by diminishing his just Demands, that we should rather add to them; we should take Delight to see our poor Dependents thrive and prosper, and become happy under us. For, surely, the most glorious Power, and best Use of Wealth is, to diffuse Joy, and Health, and Happiness to those around us. (*)

It will contribute much to the Suppression of this evil Practice, to consider that they who are guilty of it, are themselves most commonly worst served. For,

Whilst the Servants live WITH them, they commonly live UPON them; (i.e) they find out Ways to pay themselves with Interest, by Frauds and Villanies, by allowing great Gains to such as deal with them, by being Ill-managers for them, by going Shares with those who gain by them, with numberless other little Courses that are false and wicked: one Injustice begets another: and tho an unjust Master will not excuse a false and wicked

(*) That noble Emblem of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. iv.) should, in some Measure, be that of every Man of Power and Wealth in the World. A flourishing Fortune should, in this Respect, resemble a flourishing well-grown Tree; "as it grows great and strong," as "the Leaves thereof are fair," so should "the Fruit thereof be much;" and it should be "Meat for many:" These are its noblest Uses; to relieve and to refresh, to protect from Storm and Tempest, and to project a salutary Shade and Shelter to all around it.

wicked Servant, yet he often occaſions it, by ſhewing him the Way, and putting him upon ſome Kind of Neceſſity of living by ſuch Shifts. (*) – And therefore,

The ſureſt Way of being well-ſerved is to be truly juſt to them, and to give them what is their own. This makes them diligent and faithful, and gives them no Temptation to be otherwiſe: – whereas, when their Right is with-held from them, they firſt imagine they may do themſelves Juſtice; and then, by Degrees, give themſelves great Reparations.

There is alſo one more Claim which Servants have upon their Maſters, and that is a proper Atteſtation to their Characters, when they quit their Service.

This is a Duty which cannot be denied them, without manifeſt Injuſtice. If it be a Debt we owe to all our Acquaintance to bear-witneſs, when called upon, to their good Behaviour; Servants ſurely, whoſe Livelihood, whoſe ALL depends upon their Character, have a moſt unqueſtionable Right to demand this Recompence from us. Nor can there be the leaſt Difficulty in rendering this Office, with Reference to their moral Conduct, if they have acquitted themſelves honeſtly and faithfully in our Service. If the Reverſe is the Caſe, no Tenderneſs for them will juſtify the affirming an Untruth concerning them, and the rather as others may be eſſentially injured by ſuch miſtaken Lenity towards

(*) *Dignum Patellâ Operculum.*

wards them. (*) Truth indeed is to be observed in Regard of every other Matter respecting them, upon which Information is demanded. And if a strict Attention were more generally paid to it, many Evils in Families which arise from the Ill-behaviour of Servants would be prevented, and greater Pains would be taken by this Class of People to merit that Character, which the Humane and Good-natured even wish to have it in their Power to give: — they would be careful that they did not by any wilful Misconduct forfeit their good Name, or by any Imprudence put it out of the Power of those they serve to speak steadily to this Point. Their Character is their Livelihood; they should therefore on no Account trifle with it. And,

For the same Reason, Masters are in Charity bound to be extremely cautious how they admit a Doubt of their Servants' Integrity, and to be as candid as they possibly can in the Account they give of them to others. Any little Disgust we may have felt at their quitting our Service, should by no Means dispose us to give too high Colouring to their Faults, or unnecessarily to obtrude on others any unfavourable Idea of them. The Dictates of Charity are to be regarded as well as Justice, and no hasty Prejudice should induce us either to exaggerate their Faults, or conceal their Virtues. These,

(*) See the Note, in Vol. xii. Page 407, 408.

These, and whatever other Particulars are due to Servants by Contract or Agreement, may well be thought as meant and intended by St Paul, when he commands "Masters to give to their Servants that which is JUST."

The other Part of what he commands, is, to give them that which is "EQUAL," (viz.) to deal fairly, honestly and kindly with them, to give them that which is due in Reason and Conscience, tho they have not formally contracted for it.

This may include all the Particulars already mentioned, which were due in Justice, and recoverable by the Force of Law; for a Man may be as unjust in detaining that which the Law would not compel him to deliver, as in with-holding that which it would force from him, and give to the right Owner. It is the Reason and Benefit of the Contract, that makes it at first binding, and obliges the Conscience to make it good, before the Penalty of the Laws come to be considered. Masters, therefore, should give unto their Servants every thing their Consciences tell them is their Due, or, as they themselves (under a supposed Change of Circumstances) would desire, or think reasonable to have: and may all of them, we think, be included in the following Particulars,

1st. Correcting them for their Faults.

2dly,

2dly, Encouraging them in well-doing. And,

3dly, Inſtructing them in the Principles of their Chriſtian Duty; taking care of their Morals; thereby aiding and promoting their ſpiritual Intereſts.

The firſt, is, To reprove them for their Faults.

Prudence here muſt be the Meaſure of what is fit, according to their Age, Temper, and the Nature of the Offence. Some Faults ſhould be wholly overlooked: (*) ſome, tho' ſmall, ſhould be noticed that they may be amended: and others of greater Magnitude, and that proceed from habitual Careleſſneſs, or, which is worſe, from Ill-will, ſhould be cenſured with ſome Degree of Aſperity. But then we ſhould ſee to it that there be juſt Ground for the Cenſure, and that it be denounced in a Manner that does not ſavour of Malevolence; for "the Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteouſneſs of God." Tho' Severity be neceſſary ſometimes, Care ſhould be taken never to uſe it, but when it is neceſſary. We may be diſpleaſed, and ſhew our Diſpleaſure with ſome Warmth, and yet not be vindictive or reſentful. Every Approach towards this ſort of Temper ſhould be carefully avoided: for Servants are at all Times apt enough to imagine, their Maſters only correct them to gratify their own Ill-nature, or Ill-humour, without any Regard to their Amendment;

(*) A Maſter ſhould be ſometimes blind, and a Servant ſometimes deaf.

mendment; and, therefore, some Pains should be taken to remove this Prejudice, and to satisfy our Servants, that our Reproofs are meant for their Good; and that we take much more Pleasure in seeing them do their Duty as they ought, than in punishing them for the Neglect of it.

Anger, oftentimes, produces sad Effects, even where it prompts the Parents to correct their Children; and therefore must be carefully attended to, where that Affection is not present to restrain them from exceeding the Bounds of Moderation.

It seldom produces any good Effect. Ingenuous Minds are hurt by such Treatment, the stupid are hardened, and Servants, who are of the same violent Temper, are tempted to make Reprisals in a Way that is sure to issue in the Disgrace, if not the Defeat of their Superiors.

Having said this, we scarce need caution Masters against proceeding to further Extremities. Chastisements of a corporal Nature are rarely to be inflicted, even on young Persons who are not arrived to the full Use of their Reason. But such Treatment of grown Persons, or a Behaviour that at all borders on it, is illiberal to the last Degree. (*) St.

(*) If thy Servant be past a Youth, rebuke his Faults in private; public Rebuke hardens Shame: above all things, strike him not; he is not fit for our Service, who, after wise Rebukes, will either deserve our Strokes, or digest them.

St. Paul, in a similar Text, forbids it, at least by Consequence: "forbear Threatning," that is, use not loud, severe, menacing Language to your Servants, much less any Violence to their Persons. And how contrary every thing of this Sort is to the Genius of the Christian Religion, as well as to Decency and good Sense, we need not take Pains to shew.

The Man therefore of this Complexion, if he calls himself a Christian, gives a Lie to his Profession; but at the same Time rescues it from Disgrace, by telling all around him that he is only a Pretender to the Character he assumes.

But how are Servants to be reproved when they do amiss? With Gentleness, and Moderation, if they are of a soft and ingenuous Temper, and the Fault is of no great Consequence: with Firmness and Asperity, if they are obstinate and unyielding, and the Fault is considerable. Reproof should be well-timed: never given when we are in a Passion, and so incapable of addressing them with Calmness and Dignity; and always, if possible, when they are in a Disposition to listen to our Reproofs, and to profit by them. It should not be too frequently repeated, for, if it is, it will lose its Effect. The Object should be Conviction and Amendment, not the Gratification of Resentment. And a Reproof well-taken should instantly and totally

annihilate the Fault (*). "As an Ear-ring of Gold, (ſays Solomon) and an Ornament of fine Gold, ſo is a wiſe Reprover upon an obedient Ear." In ſhort, if People have but a general Knowledge of human Nature, and a common Share of Prudence, and if all their View is to make themſelves and their Servants happy, they need not be at any great Loſs how to conduct this Buſineſs; eſpecially if they fear God, and are rightly inſtructed in the Chriſtian Religion. — But,

There is one Point where Servants have moſt need of Correction and Admonition, and yet meet with leaſt of it, and that is, in Relation to their Duty to God. Men are apt enough to chaſtiſe Neglect and Error in the Conduct of their Servants, as far as it regards their own Concerns; but the Concerns of Almighty God, the Intereſt of Religion and Virtue, are of leſs Moment with them. And yet, in Reality, the Diſhonour done to Almighty God, and the eternal Ruin of the meaneſt Mortal, conſequent to that Diſhonour, are, in themſelves, of infinitely more Importance than all the Con-

(*) We are all of us liable to Error, both of Judgment and Will: If we expect to be pardoned for them ourſelves, we ſhould alſo forgive thoſe who commit them againſt us; eſpecially as Servants (who, in due Compliment, cannot be ſuppoſed ſo diſcerning as their Maſters) may err from Ignorance and Inadvertency, and may even commit a Fault, where they meant to perform a Duty; their Ignorance, therefore, is to be paſſed over, and their Inadvertency excuſed.

Concerns of this World put together. Will any Loss of this World bear any Compariſon with the Loſs of an immortal Soul? or any earthly Gain weigh againſt that of ſaving a Soul alive! And, therefore, when Maſters are immediately on Fire for every Tranſgreſſion and Neglect of their own Will and Pleaſure, and, at the ſame Time, cold and unmoved at the greateſt Enormities againſt the righteous and unerring Will of God; it is a ſure Sign that they have greater Regard to their own Intereſt, than for the Glory of God, and the Salvation of Souls. And, indeed, this is the great and crying Complaint in the Conduct of Maſters! their utter Diſregard of the Religion and Virtue of their Servants! And, to this Neglect, ſo extenſive and univerſal, is owing the preſent general Corruption among the lower Part of Mankind. When theſe marry, or, which is much more frequent, become Parents by their Crimes, their wretched Iſſue are brought up without any Senſe of Conſcience, or Fear of God! for how ſhould they inſpire any Senſe of Religion into their Children, who are utterly void of it themſelves? And thus the lower Part of Mankind go on from Ignorance to Iniquity. And to what is all this ſo juſtly to be aſcribed, as to the Neglect of Maſters? Their conniving at the Profaneneſs and Irreligion of their Servants, and entirely neglecting, either to exhort them

to Virtue and Goodness, or to oblige them to a constant Attendance upon the Service of God. And, surely, Masters of Families would never be so careless in an Affair of this Consequence, did they consider what a severe Account they must give of this Conduct at the last. (*)

And, as this is the Duty of all Masters, so likewise is it no less their Interest; and this upon two Accounts: first, with Regard to their Children; and, secondly, with Regard to their Fortune.

First, With Regard to their Children; for, as few Parents have Leisure, or are able wholly to take care of their Children themselves, there is often a Necessity of committing them to the Care of Servants; and it is certain, that, according as those Servants are either wicked or well-inclined, the Child is early initiated, either in the Ways of Virtue, or in the Ways of Vice; and, as earlier Habits last longer, and are harder to be defaced, if Parents have any Regard either to the Happiness of their Children in this World or their Salvation in the next, nothing ought to be of nearer Concern to them than to commit them to the Care of virtuous and religious Servants in their tender Years.

As to the other Point, surely nothing can be more the Interest of all Masters of Families, than that all their

(*) Masters should remember, that as their Servants have immortal Souls, so God hath entrusted the Care thereof to them.

their Servants ſhould make a Conſcience of their Buſineſs, and ſhould perform all Parts of their Duty to them in "Singleneſs of Heart, fearing God." And, therefore, the ſure Way to make them good Servants is to make them good Men and good Chriſtians; and the ſure Way to make them ſuch, is,

2dly, To encourage them in well-doing.

Rewards and Puniſhments are the great Springs that ſet the whole World in Motion; there is hardly any thing to be done in Life without the Aid of one or both of theſe. And foraſmuch as there is a Pride in human Nature that often ſets itſelf againſt Correction, and is reſtive to Reproofs, but pliant and yielding to the leaſt Expreſſions of Kindneſs, it is frequently found, that Applauſe and Encouragement have more Influence upon us than Correction and Puniſhment.

A Will to pleaſe is an amiable Diſpoſition in all Ranks of Men, particularly Servants. And if from Ingenuouſneſs of Temper, and a cordial Affection for their Maſters, they make it their Buſineſs to conform to their Will, and are never ſo happy as when they give them Pleaſure, it is but right they ſhould receive a Recompence in this Way. A cheerful Smile, and an applauding Word, will give them Spirits, and enliven them in their Duty. On the contrary, If the Heads of Families carry themſelves with an Air of Gloomi-

neſs and Reſerve towards their Servants, and think it enough, when things are done to their Mind, that they do not find Fault; is it to be wondered that their Servants' Tempers are ſoured, that they relax in their Obedience, and that their Work goes on heavily? Would we wiſh them, then, to ſerve us cheerfully, we ſhould, on proper Occaſions, let them know that we accept ſuch Services with Pleaſure at their Hands: for the ſame Motives that excited them to excel, are the beſt Engagements upon them to continue in well-doing.

And yet, after all, I am ſenſible there is one Objection to what is here advanced, [viz.] That Commendations, ill-timed, and too frequently repeated (equally as of Reproofs) will loſe their Effect. The greater Part of Servants cannot bear to be encouraged, but are in as much Danger of ſuffering by Praiſe as by Cenſure: the former becomes the Occaſion of exciting Conceit and Pertneſs, the latter of Prejudice and Ill-will. To ſuch Servants, therefore, that Applauſe ſhould be dealt out ſparingly, which may be beſtowed on others with ſome Degree of Profuſion: ſo that Prudence and good Nature are to be equally conſulted in the Diſtribution of this Benefit.

But indeed it is happy when the Tempers of Servants and Maſters will allow of a mutual Exchange of cheerful Services and cheerful Acknowledgments; with-

without any Injury to Subordination on the one Hand, or Authority on the other. Where this is the Caſe, we ſee Pleaſure ſmiling on every Brow, and Peace, Harmony, and Joy prevail through the whole Houſe. The Maſter ſays, Do this, and the Servant does it: his Commands are executed with almoſt the ſame Eaſe that they are given, and the Commendation, in Return, is, Well done good and faithful Servants!

Indeed, If Servants always found that they conſtantly roſe in their Maſter's Favour in Proportion to their Modeſty and Humility, and, on the other Hand, found that every Degree of Pride threw them into as great a Degree of Diſgrace, this, joined to proper Inſtruction and Admonition, would probably have happy Effects upon their Diſpoſitions. But, in Truth, the great Evil, which is the Foundation of all this Pride and Perverſeneſs, is the Want of a right Senſe of Religion and Virtue. If they once knew that Humility would make them amiable in the Sight of God and Man, and that Pride would render them hated by both, they would ſoon ſtudy to obtain the one, and to avoid the other. —— But, There are two Inſtances of Encouragement to Servants, which I have not yet mentioned; and thoſe are, the Regard that ſhould be had to the Merits of good Servants in the laſt Wills of their Maſters, and when the Servants are paſt their Labour.

As to the firſt of theſe: Foraſmuch as the ſmall Pittance which is paid to Servants, under the Name of Wages, is but a poor Reward for Fidelity and Diligence, it is the Duty of a Maſter to remember a good Servant in his laſt Will; to make the beſt Proviſion he can for him, againſt that Time when it will be no longer in his Power either to reward his Fidelity or relieve his Wants. A dutiful and conſcientious Servant ſhould always be conſidered in the next Degree to a dutiful Child, and before a Child that was undutiful; agreeably to the Wiſe Man, "A wiſe Servant ſhall bear-rule over a Son that cauſeth Shame, and ſhall have Part of the Inheritance."

As to the laſt Point, [viz] The Regard due to a Servant when he is paſt his Labour; we think there cannot be a greater Inſtance of Cruelty, and Inhumanity, than to ſuffer an aged Servant, who hath ſpent the Strength of his Youth and Health in our Service, to be reduced to Miſery and Want, when his Infirmities have diſabled him from further Labour. Humanity will prompt us to take ſome Care, even of a Brute, in the ſame Circumſtances; and, ſurely, much more ſhould it oblige us to take ſome Care of our Fellow-creatures, of an aged and a faithful Servant, in the Decline of Life. — "Caſt him not away in the Time of Age; forſake him not when his Strength faileth."

The Caſes of Sickneſs, or accidental Loſs of Limbs, in our Service, which diſable from Labour, fall alſo under this Head; and are rather more calamitous than the Caſe of Old Age; and, conſequently, call at leaſt for equal Compaſſion and Humanity at our Hands; and, therefore, the Cruelty of thoſe Maſters is never to be forgiven, who make the Miſery and Misfortunes of their Servants, Reaſons for caſting them off.

Theſe are Courſes that are likely to make good Servants, and to encourage ſuch as are ſo, and to oblige them to ſerve their Maſters with the greateſt Care and Affection, there being none of ſo low and abject a Spirit, but will ſtrive to make Amends for kind and good Treatment.

Sermon

SERMON CCCC.

The Duty of Maſters, continued.

Coloſ. iv. 1. "Maſters, give unto your Servants "that which is juſt and equal, knowing that ye "alſo have a Maſter in Heaven."

The remaining Duty of Maſters, now to be conſidered, and equally included under the Rule of the Apoſtle, when he commands "Maſters to give unto their Servants that which is EQUAL," is, Inſtructing them in the Principles of their Chriſtian Duty; – taking care of their Morals; thereby aiding and promoting their ſpiritual Intereſts.

Servants are to be inſtructed in the Principles of their Duty, to be excited to Diligence and Induſtry, and encouraged in them, that they may be virtuous and religious, and as uſeful in the World as they can. (*)

Servants ſhould be taught the Difference between Good and Evil; their Obligations to do unto others as they would have others do to them; the Beauty of Virtue, and the Deformity of Vice; the Advantages which the former draws after it, and the Miſeries conſequent upon

(*) See Vol. xviii. Page 198.

upon the latter. But how are theſe Truths to be conveyed to their Minds? In various Ways. It will ſometimes be right to addreſs our Diſcourſe immediately to them on theſe Matters. And when we do ſo, we ſhould conſult their Capacities and Tempers, endeavouring to make our Inſtructions eaſy to their Underſtandings, and the Motives with which we enforce them intereſting to their Paſſions. The fit Opportunity ſhould be ſeized, and every Aid that Circumſtances afford, improved. Sometimes, and indeed frequently, Knowledge of this Kind may be inſinuated to their Minds by familiar Diſcourſe, when they are waiting on us. A trifling Incident, a ſudden Remark, a paſſing Obſervation, often conveys Admonition to the Heart for which it did not ſeem intended. — This obliquie Way of teaching our Servants is a very happy, and may prove a very effectual One.

Means too of Inſtruction, and Leiſure to perform their Duty to God, ſhould be allowed them. Books upon moral Subjects ſhould be put into their Hands: but above all, the reading of the Bible ſhould be urged upon them, which diſſeminates the Nature and Obligations of Morality, in a Manner infinitely more artleſs and commanding than any other Book whatever.

And it is an Argument of Prudence as well as Benevolence in Maſters to open the Avenues to ſuch In-

ſtruction, by enabling thoſe to read, who come totally rude and uninſtructed into their Service. And a very ſmall Portion of Leiſure, at proper Seaſons, for theſe Purpoſes, will be ſufficient for their Inſtruction in that which ſhould be the great Buſineſs of Life, their Duty, both to God and Man. (*) And, be aſſured, one Hour thus employed will bring a Bleſſing upon all the reſt. Or, if this be more than the neceſſary Buſineſs of your Calling will allow, the Sabbath is the Lord's; let That, at leaſt, be allowed for their Inſtruction in the Ways of Salvation and Life; and let it not only be allowed, but ſee that it alſo be employed in the Duties of Religion, and attending upon the public Worſhip of God; and, above all, take-care they are not withheld from the Service of God, by being employed in the Service of your Luxury, Vices, and Vanities; and, if they are ſometimes withheld by the neceſſary Duties of their Place, be it your Care to ſee thoſe Omiſſions made up by a diligent Attendance at other Seaſons.

The next thing we have to recommend, is,

2dly, The watching over the Morals of our Servants. Inſtruction will avail nothing, if not reduced to Practice: and the beſt Means to attain this End is to convince

(*) A Maſter is Prieſt and Prophet in his own Houſe, as well as Lord and King. He is to inſtruct his Family in Religion, to inform their Ignorance, excite them to ſerve God, to pray with and for them, and to direct them in the Way to Heaven.

vince them, by our ſtrict Attention to their Behaviour, that as we have conſecrated our Habitation to Virtue, ſo we are determined at all Events it ſhall have no Fellowſhip with the unfruitful Works of Darkneſs. As to groſs Immoralities, few Caſes of this Sort ariſe, that will admit of ſuch Extenuation as to juſtify the continuing the Delinquent in our Service. Yet if Satisfaction could be obtained of the Genuineneſs of his Repentance, and that the Crime would not be repeated, a good Maſter would be happy in giving him an Opportunity of recovering his Character. In moſt Caſes, however, the Experiment is dangerous. But it is not with groſs Immoralities we are here concerned: the Object is to guard againſt a diſtant Approach towards thoſe Evils. The Indignation of a Maſter ſhould kindle at the very firſt Expreſſion of Falſehood, Injuſtice, Lewdneſs, Detraction, Obſtinacy, Inhumanity, and the like. Severe and pointed Reproof ſhould be given, and theſe failing, Expulſion ſhould Follow; and ſo the Spread of the Infection be prevented. (*)

"A froward Heart, (ſays David,) ſhall depart from me: I will not know a wicked Perſon. Whoſo privily ſlan-

(*) Maſters ſhould inſtruct the ignorant, reduce the erroneous, rebuke the diſobedient, diſcard the incorrigible and audacious, and more eſpecially require their Servants religiouſly to obſerve the Lord's Day, in the Obſervance of which a great Part of the Life of Religion conſiſts.

slandereth his Neighbour, him will I cut off; him that hath an high Look, and a proud Heart, will not I suffer. Mine Eyes shall be upon the Faithful of the Land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect Way, he shall serve me. He that worketh Deceit, shall not dwell within my House: he that telleth Lies, shall not tarry in my Sight."

On the contrary, virtuous Dispositions in Servants should be cherished, assisted, and rewarded. It will sometimes so happen, that Circumstances of a peculiar Kind will arise to try their Sincerity, Honour, and Gratitude. And having nobly acquitted themselves on these Occasions, they should not fail to receive such substantial Tokens of Respect, as may convince them that these fine Feelings and exalted Sentiments are common to their Masters with them. Faults frankly acknowledged, without the little Subterfuges of mean Prevarication, should be as frankly forgiven. The utmost Care should be taken to draw a Line between the Errors of a mistaken Judgment, and those of a depraved Will. And we should be infinitely more lavish in our Commendations of one simple undisguised Expression of an honest Heart, than of the most striking Effect of Wit and Genius. —— But there is another Matter we have to recommend to the Heads of Families, which is of as great Consequence as any we have yet mentioned, and that is,

3dly,

3dly, The ſetting their Servants good Examples.

Example ſways the whole World, and either ruins or reforms it, as it is good or evil. As Kingdoms are influenced by the Example of the Prince, and Armies by the Example of their Captains, and all Societies of Men by ſuch as have Authority over them; ſo Families naturally fall into the Imitation of their Fathers, and Servants are led inſenſibly into the Manners of their Maſters.

Could we, therefore, ſuppoſe a Maſter ever ſo attentive to the Morals of his Servants, ever ſo ſevere in reprehending Vice, and ever ſo profuſe in his Praiſe of Virtue; if he were himſelf a bad Man, it would have but little Effect. The Light of a good Life is, indeed, a ſilent, but it is at the ſame Time a ſtrong, a living, and almoſt an irreſiſtible Exhortation to Goodneſs; its native Beauty attracts the Love and Admiration of all that behold it; and what Men admire, they imitate. (*).

Whilſt,

(*) There cannot be a more lovely, there cannot be ſo lovely, ſo glorious an Employment in Life, as that of leading in the Ways of Salvation and Truth, and conducting to eternal Happineſs. *Captain of our Salvation*, is the moſt glorious Title that was ever conferred even upon the Son of God! and, if ſo, certainly the contrary to all this, the Conductor to Vice and Villany, the Leader to Death and Deſtruction, is the dreadfulleſt Employment, as well as the moſt hateful Character in Life.

It becometh all Men, therefore, and above all Men it becometh

Whilſt, on the other Hand, Ill Example, ſtriking in with our corrupt Nature, hath far greater Prevalence, and prevails even againſt Exhortation and Inſtruction. Nor, indeed, is it to be wondered at: for how is it imaginable that a Servant ſhould profit by the wholeſome Admonition of a Maſter, in whoſe Countenance, Language, and Deportment, Vice is conſtantly held up to his

Chriſtians, to be cautious and prudent in their Behaviour. But, to the Maſter of a Family, theſe Obligations are every one of them more cogent and binding. When a Man hath once taken upon him this important Office, (for ſo it is) the Circle of his Duties then is greatly enlarged, and extends itſelf on every Side: It is then incumbent on him, to let no bad Examples, much leſs his own, to influence the Lives and Manners of thoſe he is placed over, leſt they chill in his Wickedneſs to countenance their Folly; and his Authority and Example to give Sanction to their Guilt. Indeed,

The Depravity of the Order of Servants amongſt us, is the Subject of univerſal Complaint, and the ſevereſt Burden upon the domeſtic Felicity of Numbers: Tho' perhaps, the Cauſe and the Remedy of the Evil are both to be drawn from other Sources, than thoſe which are generally propoſed: to be drawn rather from the Heads of Families, than from thoſe who act in menial Capacities.

A prudent and conſcientious Maſter, for the moſt Part, makes prudent and regular Servants; and, it is from the Increaſe of ſuch Examples, that we muſt expect Improvement in our inferior Attendants. For, How affectionate ſoever the Exhortations of the Preachers of the Goſpel be, or how often ſoever repeated Inſtructions be given to young Perſons in other Places; yet, if the Examples they find at Home in the Practice of common Life, be vicious and contrary to the Precepts and Admonitions given them in Form; the Effect of ſuch Inſtructions cannot but be, comparatively ſpeaking, very inconſiderable.

his View in its moſt hideous Forms? Is it to be expected that Leſſons of Meekneſs, pronounced by Lips accuſtomed to Wrath and Violence, ſhould perſuade? Is it to be expected that Cenſures on Guile and Diſhoneſty, ſhould come with Energy from a baſe and unprincipled Heart? Is it to be expected that Men ſhould be deterred from Intemperance and Lewdneſs, by the Remonſtrances of thoſe who live in a Courſe of Diſſipation and criminal Indulgence? Virtue, it is true, is no leſs amiable for its being reproached by their Conduct, who would be underſtood to be its Friends. But then ſuch Maſters muſt not wonder, that their Servants regard their Actions rather than their Words, and by copying after theſe, repay them in Kind, for the Affronts they thus offer to Decency and common Senſe.

On the contrary, where virtuous Inſtructions and virtuous Characters are in perfect Uniſon, they will ſcarce fail to produce the deſired Effect on the Minds of Servants. Awed by the Authority of the former, and allured by the Sweetneſs of the latter, they will find it difficult to reſiſt the Dictates of Truth, Honour and Decency. Reproofs will ſtrike their Conſciences with double Force, and Counſels inſinuate themſelves to their Hearts with peculiar Pleaſure. They will be proud to imitate the Virtues of their Superiors, and

dread the Idea of drawing on themſelves the Cenſures of thoſe, who are equally venerable and lovely in their Eyes. And hence it commonly happens, though not always, that good Maſters have good Servants; and People are generally diſpoſed to form their Opinion of the Heads of Families, by the Behaviour of thoſe who ſerve them. — Which brings me,

Laſtly, To conſider the Attention which it is incumbent on Maſters to pay to the religious Intereſts of their Servants.

Religion is a due Regard to the Authority of God: and thoſe cannot be called good Morals which do not proceed from that Principle. It is however poſſible, that Men who have no proper Regard to the Divine Authority, may yet be induced, by the Fear of Man and a Concern for their worldly Intereſts, to behave themſelves in the general with Integrity, Sobriety, and Decency. But it is RELIGION, and That only, which will infallibly ſecure the good Morals of Servants: they who fear God cannot allow themſelves to do a bad Action. And this is a good Reaſon why the Heads of Families ſhould uſe their utmoſt Endeavours to promote Religion among their Domeſtics. If you would be ſerved with Integrity, Attention and Cheerfulneſs, look well to this Point. (*) This

(*) Thoſe, who in their earlier Years have been oppreſſed by Want and Penury, are ſeldom bleſt with the Advantages of a good liberal

This Object gained, whatever little Indiſcretions your Servants may be guilty of, you may be ſure your Subſtance will not be purloined, your Affairs will not be neglected, nor your Authority affronted.

But Religion is a Concern that affects the perſonal Intereſt of Servants in the higheſt Degree – their Happineſs both here and hereafter. A pious Maſter therefore, ſeparate from the Conſideration of the Benefit that will accrue to his domeſtic Concerns from their fearing God, will earneſtly wiſh to promote theſe their beſt Intereſts. And how is this to be done? By ſeaſonable Counſels and Admonitions; by a regular Attention to family Duty; and by requiring their conſtant and ſerious Attendance on public Worſhip. Subjects theſe which we ſhall hereafter inſiſt on in their proper Places, and ſhall therefore here only prefix a few general Remarks, ſubmitting them to the Chriſtian Prudence and Benevolence of Maſters.

If then we would allure our Servants to the Love and Practice of Religion, we ſhould, in the firſt Place, do our utmoſt to conciliate their Affection to us. Having gained their Eſteem and Good-will, we ſhall have the

liberal Education; their Ideas are confined in a narrow Circle, their Minds often wafted towards Evil by Habit and Cuſtom, and kept in Ignorance & Darkneſs from the Want of Opportunities to improve; a Maſter, therefore, if he hath Learning and Capacity, ſhould endeavour to open and enlighten them. Serm. CCCC.

the more eaſy Acceſs to their Hearts. Perſuaded that we ſincerely wiſh them well, they will the more readily attend to what we ſay. Whilſt we are endeavouring to convince them of the Truth, and to make them ſenſible of the Importance of Religion, we ſhould take particular Care that they have full Proof from the general Courſe of our Behaviour, not only that we are ourſelves perſuaded of its Truth, but that we do indeed conſider it as by far the moſt important Concern in the whole World. The Fervour of our Devotion, accompanied with the Strictneſs of our Morals, will have an Effect to awaken their Attention, at certain Seaſons, to theſe great Matters. But at the ſame Time we ſhould guard againſt a Prejudice, which often nips the firſt ſerious Thoughts in the Bud, and creates a Diſguſt that no Reaſoning can ſubdue; we mean a Notion that Religion is a ſevere, ſour, ill-natured thing. Servants will narrowly watch their Maſters; and if they obſerve a continual Gloom on their Countenances, and a forbidding Auſterity and Reſerve in their Manners, they will conclude that this Buſineſs of Religion which they talk ſo much of, can be no very agreeable thing. We ſhould therefore ſtudiouſly avoid this great Evil, and endeavour by an open, frank, cheerful, good-natured Deportment (all which we are ſure Religion teaches) to convince them, that it is as

friendly

friendly to their present Comfort, as to their everlasting Happiness. — Events of a providential Kind that are awakening, such as narrow Escapes from Danger, Sickness, and particularly Death when it enters our Houses, should be carefully improved. At such Times they will be more susceptible of religious Impressions than at others, and affectionate Counsels addressed to their Hearts on these Occasions, will be likely, with the Blessing of God, to produce very important Effects. Sufficient Time we should allow them for Recollection and Devotion, and to this End guard against an Evil, which, in too many Families, is the Bane of Religion, namely, frequent and late Entertainments. How is it possible that either Masters or Servants, distracted with the Hurries of domestic Concerns till late indeed, should either before they go to Rest, or at an early Hour they are obliged to rise, have proper Calmness or Leisure for serving God in their Retirements?—In fine, these and all other Measures we take to promote the great Object of their Salvation, should be crowned with our fervent Prayers to God, remembring ourselves, and taking Pains to fix this Sentiment on their Minds, that the Grace of God is absolutely necessary to renew the Heart, and prepare Men for another State, which is graciously offered in the Gospel to all who ask it, and duly improve it.

And now, need any Arguments be uſed to urge Maſters, who fear God, to their Duty in all theſe Particulars? Have you no Tenderneſs for your Servants, no Compaſſion for their precious and immortal Souls? Have you no Wiſh that they may eſcape the Wrath to come, and be happy with God for ever? Do you not conſider their ſpiritual as well as temporal Intereſts, in a Senſe entruſted to your Care? And! how unutterable will be the Pleaſure you will feel on the great Day of Account, to have their Praiſes, together with thoſe of the great Judge of all Men, poured upon your Head, on their Behalf, if, through your Means, they attain the Salvation of their Souls! And, on the other Hand, what Horror, what Grief and Anguiſh will then ſeize upon you, if, neglecting theſe Means, they ſhall, in that Day, riſe up in Judgment againſt you, and ſay, "Lo! this is the Man that was Lord over me; "I was ignorant, and he inſtructed me not: I was vile, "and he reſtrained me not: Curſed be the Man that "was Lord over me, and the Maſter that gave me no "Advice!" God alſo, in juſt Judgment, confirming the ſame: "Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels: — Foraſmuch as ye have not done it to the leaſt of theſe my Brethren, ye have not done it unto me." — Indeed,

Theſe Offices we ought to do them from the ſole

Motive

Motive mentioned in the Text, "Knowing that we also have a Master in Heaven, neither is there any Respect of Persons with Him."

Equality of Circumstances and Condition naturally and of Necessity produces some Degree of Love and Attention. The surest Way, therefore, to become good, humane, and tender Masters to our Servants, is to reflect that we also are Servants ourselves, that we have all our allotted Portions of Trial and Labour, our various Services, which we are bound to perform; and that our Behaviour to those beneath us, is amongst those Services, being, indeed, no inconsiderable Part of our Duty to our great Lord and Master. But,

To make these Words a more binding Reason to Masters, we are to consider them as containing a Promise of Encouragement to such as give to their Servants "that which is just and equal," — or Threatning to such as neglect the doing of it.

As they contain an Encouragement, they may be understood thus: — "Masters, give to your Servants that which is just, and equal, knowing," or remembering "that ye also have a Master in Heaven:" One from whom you expect the just Performance of all those great and precious Promises, which of his Grace and Goodness, he hath made to you: and One from whom you look for all the Mercies and Benefits, both

temporal and spiritual, that are either fit for him to give, or for you to receive: and One who hath promised to be a bounteous Master to all his faithful and obedient Servants, and to shew Mercy to such as shew Mercy to others.

"With the same Measure, then, that we mete withal, it shall be measured to us again." If we are kind and indulgent to our Servants, God will be so to us: if we pass over their Failings, excuse their Ignorance, palliate their Weakness, and pardon their Inadvertencies, He also "will not be extreme to mark what we do amiss." — Again,

As they contain a Prohibition, they may be understood thus. — "Masters, give unto your Servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master that is in Heaven" (i.e) Do what becomes you to your Servants; give them "that which is just and equal, remembring that ye also have a Master in Heaven," who commands you so to do, and who will also one Day, take an Account how ye have done it — for, he is a Master to punish, as well as to reward. With this your Master there is no Respect of Persons; the Bond and Free are all alike to him; the Meanest Servant is as dear to him, as the most honourable Master: All will be judged alike, and to him that best deserves will the best Recompense be given — but the Wicked will

will be punished, whether they are disobedient Servants, or unjust, harsh, or cruel Masters. (*)

The little temporary Distinctions of Lord and Master are calculated only for this World; for, in the World to come, all Titles will vanish, and all Distinctions cease, and Mankind will be reduced to their original Equality: High and Low, Rich and Poor, the Master and the Servant, will be summoned before the great Tribunal of God! will all appear alike, without any other Precedence, or Distinction, than what their Merit shall give them in the Sight of God;—with Regard to every thing else, equal, as in the Grave they rose from. (‡) And!

How strangely, how entirely, and how sadly will the State of things be reversed and changed at that awful Day, from what they now are! for THEN, the mighty Men of the Earth will be stript of all their Ornaments and Honours, and the Title of "good and faithful Servant," will be the highest and noblest Distinction! Then will the Sons of Vanity see themselves reduced to a Level with their meanest Slaves; and not only

(*) *Bonus, etiamsi serviat, liber est: Malus autem, si regnat, Servus est; non unius Hominis, sed, quod gravius est, tot Dominorum, quot Vitia sunt.*

(‡) The meanest Slave upon Earth is upon the same Foot of natural Equality, and of equal Acceptance in the Sight of God, with the mightiest Monarch in the Universe; all equally the Sons of God, and Heirs of everlasting Salvation.

only so, but will see some of those Slaves placed high above them. How will their proud Hearts be mortified, to behold their poor Vassals, whom they would now scarce vouchsafe to look down upon, exalted to high Degrees of Honour and Eminence, and themselves reduced to the lowest Condition of Misery and Contempt! so low, that those very Slaves will pity them! so low, as, perhaps, to beg a small Charity from the meanest of their Creatures; as the rich Man in the Gospel, who "was clothed in Purple, and fared sumptuously every Day," was reduced to beg Relief by the Hand of that very Creature, whose "Sores the Dogs licked, at his Gate!" to beg, "that Abraham would send Lazarus to dip the Tip of his Finger in Water, to cool his Tongue." How many haughty Masters will be reduced to the like sad Estate at the last Day; suing to their Slaves, and suing, as he did, to be denied; and receiving, instead of Relief, the same severe Return, "Thou, in thy Life-time, receivedst thy good things," and this, thy Slave, "evil things," at thy Hands; "but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."

I shall make this short Inference from the Whole, not foreign, we presume, from the Subject, [viz] the absolute Necessity of our Obedience to God, and the Motives to it — for the highest Master on Earth is but a Servant to God; "for we also have a Master in Heaven."

God,

God, in his Character as a Maſter, as in every other Reſpect, is perfect in the higheſt Degree. He hath an uncontroled Authority over us, to which he is entitled by every imaginable Conſideration: and that Authority is exerted in Concurrence with infinite Wiſdom, Juſtice, and Goodneſs. He requires Obedience to his Will in all things, and in doing ſo He conſults our Good, as well as his own Honour. And, like a good Maſter, fails not to inſtruct his willing Servants in their Duty, to aſſiſt them in the Diſcharge of it, and to reward them infinitely beyond their Deſerts. Their numerous Failings he overlooks and forgives; and, as on the one Hand, he gently reproves them when they do amiſs; ſo, on the other, their humble and cordial Endeavours to conform to his Pleaſure he graciouſly approves and commends. Indeed his Conduct towards them is, in every Circumſtance of it, paſſing Wonder.

Now, If ſinful Men expect Obedience from their Servants, upon the Warrant of their bare Command, in evil and unrighteous Acts; ought not the expreſs Command of God, all whoſe Commands are holy, juſt and good, ought they not much more to be regarded? — Beſides,

"There is this Motive to Obedience in Godlineſs, above that of human Injunction, that the Eye of the Lord is always upon us, beholding the Evil and the

Good." Even in Matters of this World, Diligence is required; ſurely therefore it is no leſs needful in the Service of God, but rather more ſo, by how much, both the Maſter is of greater Majeſty, and the Service of greater Importance. But how diſingenuous has been our Character, and how baſe our Conduct, towards him! Have we obeyed him in all things? ſo far from it; that, inſtead of ſerving him humbly, faithfully, diligently and cheerfully, as we expect our Servants ſhould ſerve us; Pride, Infidelity, Sloth, and Reluctance, have too often diſgraced our Services. What Cauſe, therefore, have we for the deepeſt Humiliation and Contrition in his Preſence?

"Repine not, then, O Man, at the State of Servitude; it is the Appointment of God, and hath many Advantages; it removeth thee from the Cares and Solicitudes of Life.

"The Honour of a Servant is his Fidelity; his higheſt Virtues are Submiſſion and Obedience.

"Be patient, therefore, under the Reproofs of thy Maſter, and when he rebuketh thee, anſwer not again. The Silence of thy Reſignation ſhall not be forgotten.

"Be ſtudious of his Intereſts, be diligent in his Affairs, and faithful in the Truſt which he repoſeth in thee.

"Thy Time and thy Labour belong unto him, defraud him not thereof, for he payeth thee for them."

And,

"And, — Thou who art a Maſter, be juſt to thy Servant, if thou expecteſt from him Fidility; and reaſonable in thy Commands, if thou expecteſt a ready Obedience.

"The Spirit of a Man is in him; Severity and Rigour may create Fear, but can never command his Love.

"Mix Kindneſs with Reproof, and Reaſon with Authority; ſo ſhall thy Admonition take-place in his Heart, and his Duty ſhall become his Pleaſure.

"He ſhall ſerve thee faithfully from the Motive of Gratitude; he ſhall obey thee cheerfully from the Principle of Love; and fail not thou, in Return, to give his Diligence and Fidelity their proper Rewards." (*) For, "thou alſo haſt a Maſter in Heaven."

What are all the Wealth and Power of this World upon which we ſo vainly value ourſelves? What are they but great Stewardſhips, of which the Owners ſhall give a ſevere Account at the laſt Day? What then is the great Buſineſs of Life, but to provide, that we may believe ourſelves ſo, in this Account, that, at the laſt, we may be found in the Character of that faithful and wiſe Steward, whom his Lord ſhall make Ruler over his Houſehold, to give them their Portion of Meat in due Seaſon. Bleſſed is that Servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing. But, if that Servant

(*) See No. 107, of the Spectator.

vant shall say in his Heart, my Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to beat his Fellow Servants, and to eat and drink, and be drunken, the Lord of that Servant shall come in a Day when he looketh not for him, and at an Hour when he is not aware, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his Portion with the Unbelievers."

To Conclude:— What can shew the Excellence and Usefulness of the Christian Religion better, than the Care it takes to secure the Happiness of all the World, by securing the Duties of all Relations, both Natural and Civil?

Even in a temporal Way, the Hopes and Fears which our Laws hold-out; with the Love and Esteem, or Dislike and Hatred, which we procure upon either the Performance or Neglect of our several relative Duties, are great. But,

What are these to what the Christian Doctrine offers; when to the faithful, just & true Discharge of all our Duties, it offers all the natural Advantages of doing well, here; together with everlasting Life in Happiness hereafter? — And, to the free Contempt and Neglect of all these several Duties, to all the natural Inconveniences and Mischiefs of doing ill, it threatens endless and amazing Punishments.

What mighty Encouragements to good Morality are

are these? and, what strange Discouragements to bad?

Let no One, therefore, think it so indifferent a thing whether they well or ill discharge the Duties of their several Relations; for, if Religion were divided into Parts, the Duties that we owe to one another, would make up by far the greatest Part of it; (*) and Heaven and Hell are to reward the good Performance, and punish the Neglect, of them.

In vain, then, do we seek for Ease and Happiness in Liberty and Disengagement from our relative Duties: for, it is evident that, as this World is ordered, it is impossible to be at Ease, but by a faithful Discharge of those several Obligations laid upon us, by the Relations we contract among ourselves; for, as we are sociable Creatures, we must have all the social Virtues; nor can we expect to receive any, whilst we pay no Duty, to whom it is due from us. (†) Let

(*) See Vol. iv. Page 232, &c.

(†) From the *relative Antitheta* in the respective Duties of Masters and Servants, as here and elsewhere, with other Duties, mentioned by the Apostle, it is observable, that as in Nature, in the Frame and Construction of the material Fabric of the Universe, all Operations of the Parts of Matter are mutual upon each other, for the Support and Preservation of the Whole; so in Morality and Religion, all Duties are of reciprocal Obligation. Wherever the Duty of the Inferior is mentioned, it is always to be understood that the Duty of the Superior is proportionably supposed. *Parents* are to support, and be gentle towards their Children; "bringing them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord." *Masters* are to exact Ser-

Let us, then, put up our Prayers to the ſupreme Diſpenſer of every good and perfect Gift, that he will aſſiſt us in the Performance of theſe moral and religious Duties; that he will inſpire our Hearts with that Love and Benevolence, that Care and Induſtry, that Zeal and Aſſiduity, which are neceſſary to the Diſcharge of them; that we may all, in our ſeveral Stations, punctually and regularly perform the Taſk appointed us, which alone can procure our Eaſe, Satisfaction and Happineſs here, and ſecure eternal Joy and Felicity hereafter.

vice, not rigorouſly and cruelly, but with Mildneſs, and according to the Terms contracted for. *Governors*, in the Church, are not to "lord it over the Heritage of God," nor to aſſume to themſelves Dominion over the Conſciences of Men; but, as faithful Stewards of the Myſteries of God, to aſſiſt Men in underſtanding the Will of God, and to exhort them continually to practiſe it in Peace and Love. *Magiſtrates* are to govern according to the Inſtructions given them: They ſhould "put on Righteouſneſs and Judgment:" "They ſhould be Eyes to the Blind, and Feet to the Lame:" They ſhould be as "Fathers to the Poor; and the Cauſe which they know not," they ſhould "ſearch out." And laſtly, *Princes*, or *Supreme Civil Governors*, are to uſe Power within the Limits of Law and Reaſon; "for Power is given them of the Lord, and Sovereignty from the Moſt-High; who will try their Works, and ſearch out their Counſels; ---. For He which is Lord over All ſhall fear no Man's Perſon, neither ſhall He ſtand in Awe of any Man's Greatneſs; For He hath made the Small and Great, and careth for All alike."

Sermon

SERMON CCCCI.

On Family-Religion.

Josh. xxiv. 15. "——As for me and my House, we will serve the Lord."

Having, in this and the preceding Volume, largely considered the separate Duties of Parents, Masters, &c. in their several Offices, as such; we shall now consider them conjunctively in the great Duties of Family-Religion and Family-Prayer. "As for me and my House, we will serve the Lord." ——I shall treat first, on the former of these, Family-Religion. And here,

A more striking Scene can scarcely be beheld, than that exhibited to our View in the History before us, Joshua, the Servant of the Lord, and the Successor of Moses, at the Head of a numerous Household, with a Countenance which Piety and Age had made serene and venerable, publicly announcing his own personal Regard to Religion, and offering his Example in the Government of his Family to the Imitation of all the Tribes of Israel.

Having brought the Israelites into the promised

Land,

Land, his great Desire was to establish them in the Worship of the one true God, who had brought them out of Egypt, and given them the Possession of the good Land of Canaan. And finding himself weak and declining, and fearing lest, after his Death, the People should fall from the true Religion to the Worship of Idols, he, like a wise and good Governor, considers how he might keep them firm and stedfast in their Religion, and prevent their Defection to Idolatry. To this End he calls a general Assembly of all the People of Israel, and in a very eloquent Speech gives them a brief Historical Account and Deduction of the great Mercies of God to them and their Fathers, from the Days of Abraham to that Time. From the Consideration of which he earnestly exhorts them to renew the Covenant with God, and solemnly to promise, that they would for ever "fear the Lord, and serve him in Sincerity and Truth;" totally renouncing the idolatrous Practices of the Heathens. And then, in the Text, as if they had never engaged themselves to God by Covenant before, he leaves them to their free Choice and Liberty, "If it seem evil unto you, to serve the Lord, chuse you this Day whom ye will serve." Not that they were at Liberty whether they would serve the true God or not, but to insinuate to them, that Religion ought to be their free Choice; and that the true Religion hath those

Land,

those real Advantages peculiar to it, as to recommend it to any considerate Man's Choice.

The Manner of his Address is at once authoritative and persuasive. It is, as if he had said, "If, after you have duly weighed the Facts which have been laid before you, those of which you have been yourselves Eye-witnesses, it should seem unreasonable, or any Way prejudicial to your Interest, to serve the Lord, JEHOVAH — the God that rescued you from the cruel Yoke of Pharaoh, led you through the Wilderness, and put you in Possession of this fair and fruitful Country; chuse you this Day whom you will serve. Consider under whose Protection ye will put yourselves, and whom it is most eligible to worship, whether the God of your Ancestors, Terah, Nahor, and others, from whom your Father Abraham sprung, or the Gods of the Amorites, in whose Land ye dwell, and who were utterly unable to defend their Worshippers, or themselves, against the Vengeance of Jehovah, the only living and true God."

In such Terms does he expose the great Sin & Folly of their becoming again Idolaters. And, at the same Time, to direct and encourage them to make a right Choice, he declares his own Resolution, as a Pattern and Example for them, in which he is fixed and immoveable, whether they will follow him or not; "but as for me, and my House, we will serve the Lord."

As if he had ſaid, I have propoſed the beſt Religion to your Choice, and I both think and hope you will all ſtedfaſtly adhere to it; becauſe it is ſo reaſonable and wiſe, and ſo much for your Intereſt and Happineſs: but whatever Effect theſe my Reaſonings and Perſuaſions may have upon your Minds, if you will be ſo weak, ſo wilful, and ſo wicked, as not to diſcern and embrace the Truth, though you ſhould all make another Choice and depart from the true God, to the Worſhip of Idols, yet, for my Part, I am come to a Point, I am ſtedfaſtly reſolved, in a Caſe ſo manifeſt, ſo plain, and reaſonable, that no Number or Example ſhall prevail with me to the Contrary: It is my free, deliberate and firm Reſolution "to ſerve the Lord," to avow Jehovah for my God, in the Face of the whole World, to render him the Worſhip he has required, to aim at univerſal Obedience to his Commands, and to endeavour, to the utmoſt of my Ability, to promote his Intereſts among Mankind. And what I thus reſolve for myſelf, I will endeavour for my Family, whom I will train up in the Fear of God. By my Authority I will reſtrain them from Vice and Sin, and oblige them to comply with the external Forms of Religion. By my Counſels and Inſtructions I will endeavour to fix ſalutary Impreſſions upon their young and tender Minds. By my Example I will allure them

to the Practice of Virtue and Piety. And my inceſſant Prayers ſhall aſcend to Heaven for the Bleſſing of God on theſe my well-meant Exertions for their good. "As for me and my Houſe, we will ſerve the Lord."

A Reſolution this truly worthy of ſo great a Prince and ſo good a Man. Never did he appear to the Eyes of the pious Iſraelites in a more venerable Point of Light than upon this Occaſion. His Attitude, his Voice, his Countenance, and Manner of Addreſs, doubtleſs, all ſtrongly marked his ardent Zeal for the Glory of God, and the tender Feelings of his Heart for their real Good. Nor was the Effect inconſiderable; for the People anſwered and ſaid, "God forbid that we ſhould forſake the Lord, to ſerve other Gods. We will ſerve the Lord, for He is our God."

A double Pattern this to us, firſt, that we ſhould, if Occaſion was, ſtand alone in the Profeſſion and Practice of the true Religion; and ſecondly, by recommending the pious Care of a good Father and Maſter of a Family, to train up thoſe under his Charge, in the true Religion and Worſhip of God.

The latter of theſe (the Purport of the preſent Subject) is a Duty the more neceſſary to be conſidered, not only as being an eſſential Part of Religion, but as what is ſtrangely neglected in the preſent looſe and degenerate Age; for next to our perſonal Homage and

Service to Almighty God, and the Care of our own Souls, it is incumbent on us to make all who are under our Charge and Authority, God's Subjects, Children, and Servants; which is a more honourable and happy Relation than what they bear to us. Our Children are a natural, as the reſt of our Family are a civil and political Part of ourſelves; and we, all that we have, belong to and ought to be devoted to God and his Service. And they who truly fear God will be ſolicitous to teach it to others, eſpecially thoſe who are under their more immediate Care and Inſtruction. God had ſo great a Confidence in Abraham, as to ſay, "I know him, that he will command his Children and his Houſehold after him, and they ſhall keep the Word of the Lord, to do Juſtice and Judgment." God paſſed his Word for him, that he would carefully inſtruct his Children and numerous Family in the true Religion, and alſo charge them to propagate and tranſmit it to their Poſterity. And holy David alſo aſſerts the ſame for his Family; "My Seed (ſays he) ſhall ſerve him; they ſhall be counted to the Lord for a Generation." And it is certainly now the Duty of all Fathers and Maſters of Families, and an eſſential Part of Religion, that they be careful to do the ſame; for every Man muſt give an Account of thoſe committed to his Charge, as well as of himſelf, to God. — In ſpeaking to this Point, I ſhall, First,

First, Shew wherein this Duty consists.

Secondly, Our Obligations to it.

Thirdly, The Causes of the Neglect of this great Duty. And then,

Lastly, Endeavour to retrieve the Practice of it, by representing the fatal Consequences attending the Neglect, both to ourselves and the Public. And,

First, Let us consider the Import of this Resolution in Regard of the Master of a Family himself.

What we here mean, is, to give a clear and compendious Account of Personal-religion; and the rather as this is the true and proper Ground of Family-religion. For if he who presides over a House is himself an utter Stranger to the Fear of God, it is much to be apprehended that there will be little of it among those under his Care. Our Ideas we will class under two Heads. What it is "to serve the Lord" – and the Principles upon which every Christian is disposed so to do.

To "Serve the Lord," is a Phrase that comprehends in it the Whole of our Duty; the main Branches of which are – the Worship of God – the living a holy Life – and the using our Influence to promote the Cause of Religion in the World.

God is to be worshipped. This is the main Idea meant to be conveyed in the Text, as is evident from the Occasion on which the Words were spoken, name-

ly, the Propenſity of the Iſraelites to Idolatry? Joſhua wiſhed therefore to diſſuade them from this great Evil, and to engage them to the Worſhip of the only living and true God. The Modes of Worſhip indeed under the preſent Diſpenſation are different from thoſe of the former, not tedious and expenſive, but plain and ſimple. We are to offer Prayer and Praiſe to God, in his Houſe, in our own Houſes, and in our Retirements. We are to profeſs our Faith in Chriſt, through whoſe Mediation we look for Pardon and eternal Life, by a Submiſſion to the two Inſtitutions of Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper. And we are devoutly to attend the preaching of the Word on the ſtated Seaſons appointed for that Purpoſe, and other Opportunities that offer. This is "ſerving God," in the firſt and direct Senſe of the Phraſe. But we are ſerving him alſo, when we are conforming to the Dictates of Reaſon and Conſcience in the general Courſe of our Lives. Every Act of Juſtice, Humanity, and Benevolence we perform, in Obedience to the Will of God, is a Service rendered our Creator; (*) and he mercifully acknowledges it as ſuch. And every Endeavour to ſubdue our irregular Paſſions, and to cultivate the oppoſite Virtues, comes under the ſame Denomination. So that, as the real Chriſtian habitually aims to pleaſe God, he is continually ſerving him. – In a Word, we are on ſome Occaſions

(*) See Vol. iv. Page 234, &c.

caſions more eſpecially to uſe extraordinary Efforts, for the noble Purpoſe of promoting the Cauſe of Religion in the World. Eminent Service ſome Men have rendered their Generation, by their faithful Inſtructions, prudent Counſels, manly Defence of the Truth, right Application of their Subſtance, and exemplary Lives. By their ſpirited Exertions, with the Bleſſing of God, the Kingdom of Satan hath been ſhaken to its very Foundations, and the Church of Chriſt acquired new Splendour and Glory. Vice hath fled before their ſharp and unremitting Rebukes into Corners, and civil Society itſelf received a large Acceſſion of Honour, Wealth, and Happineſs, through their Services and Sufferings.—This it is "to ſerve the Lord."—But,

2dly, Of the Principles, upon which every real Chriſtian ſerves God.

Here we are led into a View of all thoſe Reaſonings and Affections of the Heart, which conſtitute what we call experimental Religion. Deeply ſenſible of his paſt Sins, and the miſerable Depravity of his Nature, and well perſuaded, upon the divine Teſtimony, of the abounding Mercy and Love of God through Chriſt, the Chriſtian feels himſelf diſpoſed to all that Service which has juſt been deſcribed. His Reaſonings on the great Truths of Religion are calm, ſober, and

deliberate; his Approbation of the things that are excellent, free, cordial, and unreserved; and his Resolution to adhere to God and his Duty, in a Dependence on superior Assistance, firm and steady.

These are the Principles upon which he proceeds, and the Consequence is, he obtains an Assurance in Religion, which is the noblest Cordial of human Life, the best Security against the Evils of it, and the only Preparative for a future happy State. Which leads me,

Further, To shew the several Ways and Means a Master of a Family will feel himself obliged to practise, in Order to the promoting their best Interests.

1st. It is the Duty of Heads of Houses to look well after the Morals of their Families.

Men of reputable Characters, though they may not have entered into the Spirit of Religion, feel the Importance of this Duty. Persuaded that Vice brings after it Shame, Poverty, and Wretchedness, they will not harbour it under their Roof. Who in his Senses would permit a dishoneſt Servant to enter his House, or suffer his Children, if he could prevent it, to waste his Substance in riotous Living? A Regard, therefore, to their temporal Interest will induce most People to preserve some Kind of Order in their Families. But the Restraints held over Children and Servants, which proceed merely from Motives of worldly Interest, are

too

too often feeble and ineffectual. That domeſtic Government which ſtands alone upon this Principle, reacheth not the true Sources of thoſe Evils which are ſo generally dreaded. It is Religion that lays the Ax at the Root of Vice, and enables a Maſter, feeling the Force of it in his own Heart, to take ſuch Meaſures as will effectually prevent, with the Bleſſing of God, the Seeds of Immorality from growing up in his Houſe, and ſpreading their noxious Influence all around him.

With a jealous Eye he will watch the firſt Expreſſions of Pride, Paſſion, Deceit, Indolence, and other Vices, in the Countenances, Language, and Behaviour of his Children and Servants. Theſe Evils will not fail to meet his ſtern Diſapprobation and Cenſure. Puniſhments he will inflict adequate to the Nature and Aggravation of the Offence; at the ſame Time, labouring to fix upon the Delinquent a deep Senſe of the Greatneſs of the Crime. And if, notwithſtanding all his Endeavours, the vicious Temper is not to be reſtrained, but breaks out in open and repeated Acts of Iniquity, he will take ſome prudent and reſolute Meaſure to ſeparate the infectious Member from the Reſt of the Society, and thereby prevent the Spread of the fatal Diſtemper. "He that worketh Deceit, (ſays David,) ſhall not dwell within my Houſe; he that telleth Lies, ſhall not tarry in my Sight." And, on the

other Hand, the pious Maſter of a Family will uſe his utmoſt Endeavours to cultivate the oppoſite Virtues in his Children and Servants. He will often familiarly explain to them their Nature and Tendency, and pleaſantly deſcant upon their Excellence and Utility. And the early Expreſſions of theſe amiable Qualities he will not fail to mark and applaud, rewarding them with every Token of Approbation that Prudence and Good-Nature can deviſe.

Such Meaſures as theſe for the promoting good Morals in our Families, every conſiderate Perſon muſt needs approve. But,

2dly, Another Office we owe to our Families, is, the carefully inſtructing them in the Principles of Religion. (*) The leading Truths of Natural and Revealed Religion, ſuch, we mean, as are intimately connected with Experience and Practice, every Chriſtian underſtands, and therefore ought to inculcate them upon thoſe under his Care. His Inſtructions ſhould be adapted to their Age and Abilities. It ſhould begin with the firſt Principles, (‡) and ſo proceed to thoſe that follow, taking the Scripture for his Guide, and calling in to his Aid ſuch Explanations of them as he judges moſt conformable to the Truth. His Meaning he ſhould endeavour

(*) See Objections againſt this, anſwered, Vol. xix. Page 211, 218.

(‡) —— —— *Vacuis committere Venis*
Nil niſi lene decet. —— ——

vour to convey by eaſy and familiar Expreſſions, and to illuſtrate it by apt and natural Similies. He ſhould not only require them to anſwer Queſtions put to them from their Memory, but take Pains to fix the Senſe of both Queſtions and Anſwers upon their Underſtandings. The Grounds and Reaſons of each Truth he ſhould lay open to their View, repreſenting their Importance with all the Earneſtneſs of parental Affection, examine them frequently upon the Progreſs they make, and add fervent Prayer to his Inſtructions and Counſels; conciliating their Affections to him, convincing them that he means their Good, carefully avoiding the making Religion a Taſk, not over-burdening their Memories, and properly rewarding their Diligence and Attention.

Theſe Meaſures ſurely every one's ſober Reaſon and Underſtanding muſt approve. They are ſuch as Abraham and David uſed with their Families; And ſuch as his Grand-mother Lois, and his Mother Eunice, uſed with Timothy, of whom the Apoſtle tells us, that "from a Child he had known the holy Scriptures." And what Man, whoſe Heart burns with Love to God, and whoſe Bowels yearn towards his Children, but will feel himſelf obliged to copy after the Example of theſe excellent People? Can we believe there is a God, and that our Happineſs depends upon his Fa-

vour, and not wish to impress these Sentiments upon our Children, whom we consider as Parts of ourselves? Can we be deeply sensible of the Guilt and Depravity of human Nature, and not endeavour to awaken a Conviction thereof in their Consciences? Can we see clearly our own Need of such a Saviour as Christ, and not hold him up to their View, in every Light that may attract their Hearts and Affections to him? Can we be persuaded of the infinite Pleasure which the Experience and Practice of Religion afford, and not ardently wish that they may largely participate of that divine Pleasure? Can we, in fine, believe there is such a Place as Heaven, and not long, and pray, and use our utmost Endeavours, to bring our Children, Friends, and Servants thither also? Religion is not a mere Speculation: it is an operative Principle, and these Fruits of it are a noble Evidence of its Existence and Prevalence in our Hearts.

3dly, The regular Maintenance of family Worship, is the next Duty to be considered.

We shall not here enter Particularly into our Obligations to this Duty – that will be attempted hereafter: (*) but only, following the Line we have already pursued, describe, and shew the Influence of Religion to qualify us for the right Discharge of it. – By Family-Worship, we mean the assembling our Children

(*) In the next Subject.

and

and Servants together, at convenient Seaſons, for the Purpoſe of reading the Scriptures, and offering Prayer and Praiſe to God. The Maſter of every Family ought to be King and Prieſt in his own Houſe. It is his Province to determine the proper Time for theſe ſolemn and pleaſing Exerciſes, and the Manner in which they ſhould be conducted.

The ſeveral Members of this little Community being gathered together, a Portion of Scripture ſhould be diſtinctly read, this followed, if the Situation and Circumſtances of the Family will admit, with a Song of Praiſe to God; and then the Maſter, or ſome other Perſon properly qualified, ſhould devoutly preſent the Supplication of the whole Houſe to Heaven.

Certain prudential Rules it may not be improper here to lay down, ſubmitting them to the Judgment and Piety of thoſe who preſide in Families.

The Morning and the Evening ſeem each a fit Seaſon for this ſocial Exerciſe. (*) That Time, however, ſhould be choſen which may beſt conduce to the right Diſcharge of the Duty: not a late Hour of the Morning, for That will claſh with the Buſineſs of the Day: nor a late Hour at Night, for That will indiſpoſe Perſons to ſerious Attention. The Service, for obvious Reaſons,

(*) *Imprimis venerare Deum.* ——— ———
Huic omne Principium, Huic refer Exitum.

Reaſons, ſhould not be protracted to an undue Length. Every One in the Houſe ſhould conſider it as his Duty to attend. The Scriptures ſhould be read in regular Order; that ſo their Connection may be underſtood, and the Whole in a Courſe of Time gone through. A particular Attention ſhould be paid to the Circumſtances of the Family in the Prayers addreſſed to God. And as Propriety and Brevity ſhould be aimed at, to prevent Tediouſneſs, ſo Formality ſhould be carefully guarded againſt, That being an Evil which too often attends the frequent Returns of theſe periodical Exercises. (*)

Family-Worſhip, thus conducted, with a due Regard to the important Ends of it, muſt, we think, ſtrike every good Man as a moſt reaſonable and pleaſing Service. The Scriptures authoriſe it, and many Intimations occur in it to direct us in ſome of the Circumſtances relating to it. But theſe we forbear to mention here, as alſo to combat the Diſcouragement ſome pious Minds labour under reſpecting the right Diſcharge of this Duty; (‡) it being our Deſign more particularly to conſider theſe Matters in the next Subject. But! how ſtrangely is this Duty neglected? Nor, indeed, is it to be wondered, that they who have no Senſe of their Dependence on Divine Providence, and no Taſte for the ex-

(*) See Bp. Wilkins, on Prayer.

(‡) See Vol. xvi. Page 398, &c. Serm. CCCCI.

exalted Pleasures of Devotion, should account a Service returning so frequently upon them, tedious and unprofitable. But,

It is to those Masters of Families who have Religion at Heart, that we mean here to address ourselves.

You (with the devout Joshua) feel your Obligations to Him that made you, preserves you, and saves you. It was his Providence that led you into this social Connection, gave you the Partners of your Cares and Joys, and blessed you with the hopeful Offspring, which, like the Olive-branches, surround your Table. He pitched your Tent for you; He commanded you to erect an Altar to him: And can you find in your Hearts to refuse Obedience to his Command? or to decline a Service in which you have already found your Account? Think how great the Pleasure the good Man sometimes feels, whilst officiating at the Head of his Family in this little Temple consecrated to Heaven! Recollecting the many undeserved Favours he has received, how gratefully does he acknowledge them? Calling to Mind his own and their Sins, how penitently does he confess them? Feeling the most anxious Concern for their best Interests, how earnestly does he request not only temporal, but spiritual Blessings? Viewing the Blessed God in the Character of an indulgent Parent, how passionately does he commend them

to his Protection and Love! And, amidst the various Viciſſitudes of Life, truſting under the Shadow of his Wings, with what Exultation doth he ſometimes cry out, "O God! who is like unto Thee! thy Truth, moſt mighty Lord, is on every Side."

Can ſuch a Scene as this be contemplated, and any Heart among us, in which parental Affection and genuine Piety are united, remain indiſpoſed to this Duty?

4thly, The next Duty to be conſidered, is the obliging our Families to attend regularly on the Publick Worſhip of God.

By Public-Worſhip, we mean, the paying Homage to God in his holy Church; the offering up joint Prayers and Praiſes to him in the Aſſembly of his Saints; the paying Attention to his Word, read and preached to us, and duly receiving his holy Sacraments.

As every pious Man will feel himſelf obliged to pay a due Regard to the public Worſhip, ſo they who have Families muſt be ſenſible it is their Duty to oblige their Children and Servants to attend regularly upon it.

At an early Hour the Maſter of the Houſe, at the Head of thoſe under his Care, ſhould appear in his proper Place. The Affairs of his Family ſhould be ſo adjuſted, as that not one Member of it, except Neceſſity require, be abſent. A Paſſion for Novelty, which may induce any of them to wander to various Places

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of Worſhip, ſhould be checked. His Eye ſhould duly watch their Demeanour during divine Service, that it be ſerious and attentive. At the Cloſe of the Service, the whole Family ſhould retire to their own Home. Viſits, except where Offices of Mercy are required, ſhould be interdicted, and ſocial Intercourſes for the Purpoſe of mere Amuſement avoided. Opportunity ſhould be given every One to recollect ſeriouſly by himſelf what he hath been about. And a ſuitable Exerciſe in the Evening, wherein the younger Part of the Family may have an Opportunity of giving an Account of what they have heard; when ſerious Impreſſions may be made on the Minds of all, with their ſerious joint Addreſs to Heaven, will happily and uſefully cloſe the Day.

Religion, I am ſenſible, ſhould not be made a Burden: and young Minds eſpecially, ſhould not be held too long to one Subject. As therefore two public Services are offered by the Church, ſo Prudence will teach the Maſter of a Family to direct his Diſcourſe in the Intervals of Worſhip, and to diverſify the evening Exerciſe in ſuch a Manner, as that, with the agreeable Refreſhments Nature has provided, every One may have Cauſe to call this the pleaſanteſt Day in the Week.

And now let me aſk the Maſters of Families, whether, if they were to purſue this Line of Conduct, they

might not hope, with the Bleſſing of God, to ſee Virtue and Religion flouriſh in their Houſes? Sure I am, ſuch Maſters as are Chriſtians indeed, perſuaded that the public Preaching of the Goſpel is the Appointment of Heaven for the Salvation of Men, will not, cannot, be eaſy while any under their Influence, deprive themſelves of the Opportunity of hearing it. Beſides, it is an Affront to the good Senſe and Authority of him who preſides in a Family, for any one of the Members of it to diſregard what He believes God hath required.

As to the Young, they will be eaſily led to their Duty by the gentle Hand of parental Affection. And if any One, juſt entering on Life, can, without the leaſt Pretence of Reaſon, perverſely oppoſe the Will of a Father in ſo intereſting a Concern as this, his natural Temper and his Principles muſt be horrid indeed.

But it is not to ſuch depraved young People we are here addreſſing ourſelves: It is to thoſe, to whoſe Hands Nature hath entruſted the Power, and whoſe Hearts divine Grace hath inſpired with a Diſpoſition, to contribute ſomewhat at leaſt to the preſent and everlaſting Welfare of your Children and Servants. And how can you better contribute to this great Object, than by uſing every Means in your Power, to make it agreeable to them to join you in the public Worſhip of that God, on whoſe Favour their, as well as your Happineſs depends? The

The prudent and ſteady Diſcharge of your Duty in this Reſpect, is a Dictate both of good Senſe and ſound Piety. It will do you Honour in the View of all wiſe and good Men, it will be highly pleaſing to God, and no Doubt they, in the great Day of Account, having reaped the Benefit of this proper Exertion of your paternal Authority, will, with infinite Joy, riſe up, and call you bleſſed. But,

Laſtly, A chief and principal Part of this Duty conſiſts in giving good Examples to our Families.

Altho' the Duties juſt mentioned, were diſcharged, in Regard of the external Expreſſions of them, with the greateſt Punctuality, yet their Ends would, in all Probability, be defeated, if the Heads of Families were wholly inattentive to their own Tempers and Conduct.

What ſalutary Effect will the beſt Leſſons of Morality, enforced with the ſevereſt Diſcipline, produce, if they who give them do not themſelves practiſe them?

Our Children and Servants will keep a watchful Eye on our Manners; and if, in their own Minds, they can convict us of Pride, Paſſion, Deceit, Intemperance, and the like, they will inſtantly conclude that the ſevere Hand we hold over them, does not proceed from any Motive of Good-will to them, but from a Wiſh to enſlave them to our Humours. Zeal for the Principles of Religion, they will, in ſuch Caſe, ſet down to

the Account of Narrowneſs, Bigotry, and Hypocriſy. The religious Order obſerved in the Family, they will conſider as mere Form, the Effect of Education and Cuſtom. And the Duties of public Worſhip itſelf, which we oblige them to attend upon, they will treat with Indifference, if not with Contempt.

The Admonitions of a good Man have great Power to move others to go and do likewiſe: but thoſe of a bad Man are languid, and ineffectual; becauſe there is no Encouragement for others to follow that Advice, which they who give it do not themſelves follow.

But ſuch wretchedly inconſiſtent Characters as theſe, are, we hope, rarely to be met with. There is Truth in Religion; and if the Account we have here, in the firſt Place, given of it, be juſt, as it will impell thoſe Maſters of Families, who really poſſeſs it, to the Obſervance of the Duties we have been recommending, ſo it will infallibly ſecure them from thoſe groſs Evils, which tend to deſtroy their Effect.

Permit me, here, to hold up to your View the Temper and Conduct of Joſhua, who, as he ſpake the Language of the Text with unfeigned Fervour and Sincerity, ſo, we may doubtleſs affirm, walked himſelf accordingly. The Vices which were ſternly forbidden in his Children and Servants, were, moſt aſſuredly, firſt driven with Deteſtation from his own Breaſt. And while,

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in familiar and expreſſive Language, he recommended to them the Duties of Truth, Integrity, Moderation, Meekneſs, and Benevolence: the native Beauty of theſe Virtues, was ſtill more ſtrikingly exhibited to their View in his own Countenance and Behaviour. The Truths of revealed Religion which he taught them, were the genuine Sentiments of his own Heart: and while his Doctrine dropped as the Rain, and diſtilled as the Dew upon them, he felt the Influence of thoſe divine Hopes which the Promiſe made to his Fathers, of the Meſſiah, was adapted to produce. Deeply impreſſed himſelf with the Greatneſs and Goodneſs of God, he daily offered the Prayers and Praiſes of his Family to Heaven, with a Fervour & Affection that could ſcarce fail to excite and enflame their Devotion. At the ſtated Seaſons he led up his numerous Houſe to the Tabernacle at Shiloh, and there, on the Altar Moſes had erected, preſented the Sacrifices to JEHOVAH the God of Iſrael, which he had required at his Hands. His venerable Appearance, and the unaffected Simplicity and Ardour with which he aſſiſted at theſe Exerciſes, added Solemnity to them, and begat a Reverence in the Breaſts of all around him for theſe Divine Inſtitutions. And when he withdrew from the Houſe of God to his own Habitation, the Cheerfulneſs which appeared on his Countenance, and the Benevolence which

mingled itself with all his domestic Behaviour, attached the Hearts of his Family to him, and excited a noble Emulation among them which should best imitate the Example thus set them. And, if such were our Tempers and Conduct in the Families over which we preside, there would be Light in all our Dwellings, and Joy in every Heart around us: our Houses would be Schools of Virtue, Temples of Devotion, and Nurseries for Heaven.

Sermon

SERMON CCCCII.

On the same Subject.
Obligations to it, &c.

Josh. xxiv. 15. "—— As for me and my House, "we will serve the Lord."

Having already prefaced and explained these Words, we proceed,

Secondly, To the Obligations requiring the Observance of them. And,

1st. We are under the greatest Obligation strictly to cultivate Family-Religion, both in Respect of Duty and Interest.

As to the former of these, all Authority over others is a Talent God hath entrusted us with, for their Good and Benefit, and for the right Use of which we are accountable to Him. We are obliged by all lawful Means to provide for the temporal Welfare of our Families, to feed, clothe, and give them a comfortable Subsistence; but much more are we to take-care of their eternal Happiness, in Comparison of which all temporal Concerns are as nothing. It

It would be cruel for a Father or Maſter to ſuffer a Child or Servant to want the Neceſſaries of Life; but it is a much greater Cruelty to let an immortal Soul, One for whom Chriſt died, to periſh for Want of Knowledge and neceſſary Inſtruction how to attain eternal Salvation. If he who doth not "provide for his own Houſe, hath denied the Faith, and is worſe than an Infidel," becauſe he neglects a Duty which the Law of Nature requires; what can be ſaid of them who will not provide for the everlaſting Happineſs, and prevent the eternal Miſery of thoſe who are ſo immediately under their Care and Charge?

Nature as well as Chriſtianity obliges us to procure the Happineſs of our Children, for they are Part of ourſelves; and if they periſh by our Neglect, the Guilt of it will forever lie heavy upon us.

As to Servants and other Relations under our Charge, common Humanity requires us to be concerned for their Happineſs, as being of the ſame Nature with us; but conſidered as Chriſtians, baptized into the ſame Faith, and capable of the ſame common Salvation, we are more ſtrictly obliged thereto. And if we be remiſs and negligent in the Diſcharge of this Duty, we can neither anſwer it to God, nor to our own Conſciences; The Conſideration of which ſhould effectually engage us to a faithful Performance of it.

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We are also obliged to this Duty in Point of Interest; for a Religion is the best and surest Foundation for the true Discharge and faithful Performance of the Duties of all Relations, it is therefore really for our own Service and Advantage, that those who belong to us should fear and love God. Would we have dutiful and obedient Children, diligent and faithful Servants? Nothing will so effectually procure this, as to have the Principles of Religion and the Fear of God firmly settled in them. Abraham experienced the good Success of his religious Care, both in his Son Isaac, and the chief Servant of his House, Eliezer of Damascus. What an unexampled Instance of Respect and Obedience did Isaac give to the Commands of his Father, when, without any Reluctancy, he submitted to be laid upon the Altar, and to be slain for a Sacrifice, had not God interposed and prevented it by an Angel. What an excellent Servant was Eliezer to Abraham? How diligent and faithful in his Master's Service? so that he trusted him with all he had. And when employed in his Son's Marriage, what Prudence and Fidelity did he shew in the Discharge of that great Trust, having no Rest till the Business was accomplished? These are two powerful Instances to encourage Fathers and Masters of Families to a religious Care of their Children and Servants. — And!

How did the Fear of God secure Joseph's Fidelity to his Master under a great and preſſing Temptation? He had nothing to reſtrain him from ſuch an Act, but the Conſideration of the great Truſt his Maſter had repoſed in him, the Senſe of his Duty, and above all the Fear of God, which preſerved him from conſenting to ſo wicked an Action. "How can I do this great Wickedneſs, (ſays he) and ſin againſt God?"

Hence it appears to be our Duty, and demands our greateſt Care, to inſtill the Principles of Religion into thoſe that belong to us; for if the Seeds of true Piety be ſown in them, we ſhall reap the Fruits of it. But if our Children and Servants are not taught to fear and reverence God, how can we expect they would regard and obey us? For nothing but Religion obliges Conſcience; Men will break thro' all other Ties when a fair Opportunity offers. And as Religion is neceſſary to procure God's Favour, ſo is it to ſecure the mutual Duties and Offices of Men to one another.

The Father of a Family, when he conſcientiouſly watches over the Conduct of his Dependants, is a moſt reſpectable Character, and effects in the Community, what cannot be effected by Laws and Magiſtrates either municipal or eccleſiaſtical. Let every Maſter be the Chaplain of his own Family. Let due Honour and Attention be paid to the Word of God, as it appears

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in the Scriptures themſelves, and as it is illuſtrated by the Eloquence of Divines, and the Public Happineſs will immediately receive an unſpeakable Augmentation. The Morals of the People will be purified in the Fountain, even in their Hearts; and the Bleſſing of God, without which no Nation can flouriſh, will be moſt effectually drawn down by a general Reformation. I proceed, therefore,

Thirdly, To inquire into the Cauſes of the ſhameful Neglect of this Duty, to the great Decay of Piety among us: which may in Part be aſcribed to our Diviſions and Differences in Religion; and partly, to our own Over-fondneſs, Sloth, and Irreligion. And,

1ſt, The firſt Cauſe mentioned of this Neglect of Duty, was, our Diſſenſions and Differences in Religion, whereby, under Pretence of Conſcience, a boundleſs Liberty has prevailed, and the religious Order of Families hath been, in a great Meaſure, broken and diſſolved.

Some Men, under the Pretence of ſerving God a different Way, according to their Conſciences, do wholly or chiefly neglect the Worſhip of God; if they do not worſe, frequent Places of Idleneſs and Vice.

This is a great Hindrance to Maſters of Families, to bring their Servants up in an orderly Way of Religion; and which ought to convince us of the Neceſſity

of endeavouring at a greater Union in Matters of Religion, that we may be all united in our Worship and Devotion, and serve God uniformly, with one Heart and one Mind; by which Means the Work of religious Education and Instruction will be more effectually carried on, and a steady Authority and decent Order maintained in Families. And till we are better agreed in Matters of Religion, and our unhappy Differences are laid aside, and that the Public Worship of God do in some Measure recover its Reputation, the good Order and Government of Families, as to the great Ends of Religion, is not like to have any considerable Effect. Which should make all Men who sincerely love God and Religion, to consider seriously how necessary it is to put an End to these Differences, that we may both in private Families and public Assemblies, "with one Heart and one Mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Wherefore I beseech you, in the Words of St. Paul, "that there be no more Divisions amongst you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same Mind, and in the same Judgement," so far as is necessary "to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace." But,

2dly, A second Cause of the Neglect or Hindrance of this Duty, is thro parental Affection, Sloth, and Irreligion, by which Multitudes are miserably neglected.

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In most Instances, to what is the total Neglect of this Duty owing, but to a Want of Religion? It is because Masters of Families do, in general, pay so little Attention to Religion themselves. Is it imaginable, that he who has entered into the genuine Spirit of Christianity, and, under the Influence of those divine Principles, daily aims to serve and please God, can be totally insensible of his Obligations to promote the best Interests of those he dearly loves, and who look up to him for Protection and Support? It cannot be. The miserable Neglect, therefore, of the Duties we have been recommending, in too many Houses, forces upon us the painful Suspicion of the Want of personal Religion in those who preside over them.

Who, then, does not see the great Importance, as well as the direct Tendency of a lively Sense of Religion in the Master of a Family, to animate to the right Discharge of this Branch of his Duty? Can I, inspired with an utter Detestation of Vice, and an unconquerable Attachment to Virtue, forbear to exert all my Powers to eradicate the Seeds of the former from the Bosoms of my dear Offspring, and to cherish those of the latter there? Will not my religious Feelings extort Tears of Anguish, whilst I am administering the bitter, but wholesome Draught of Correction to their Perverseness? And will not the same Feelings

ſpread a chearful Pleaſure over my Countenance, whilſt I am applauding their Flexibility and filial Obedience? Having the Command of the great God, and their temporal and everlaſting Intereſts in full View before me, theſe Duties will not be neglected through falſe Fondneſs, nor abuſed by undue Severity. — To increaſe and promote which I ſhall proceed,

Laſtly, To the laſt thing propoſed, which is, to ſhew the fatal Conſequence attending the Neglect of Family Duty, both to the Public and to Ourſelves. — And,

1ſt. To the Public. Families are the firſt Seminaries of Religion, and if Perſons are not there prepared, eſpecially in their tender Years, for public Teaching and Inſtruction, little can be expected afterwards. The Neglect of a due Preparation of our Children and Servants at Home, to make them profit by what they hear and learn at Church, is an Error productive of the greateſt Miſchief; becauſe, if no Care be taken of them in their younger Years, when moſt capable of religious Impreſſions, we cannot reaſonably expect any great Good from them afterwards. For if the Fear of God hath not been planted in them, they will be bad in all Relations; undutiful Children, idle and unfaithful Servants, ſcandalous Members of any Church, unprofitable to the Commonwealth, diſobedient to Governors, both eccleſiaſtical and civil; nay,

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Numbers on Earth, and as so many Plagues of human Society. And if no Remedy be applied to this Evil, it will continually grow worse, and in every Age diffuse and spread itself, till Impiety and Wickedness, Infidelity and Prophaneness, have over-run the World, and made it ripe for Destruction, as it was in old Time, when the "Wickedness of Man was so great, and all Flesh had corrupted itself upon the Earth, that the Flood came and swept them all away."

2dly, The Consequences of this Neglect will also be very fatal to ourselves, who will first feel the Inconvenience of our own guilty Negligence. For we can have no Security of the Duty and Fidelity of our Family to us, if they have no Fear of God, nor Sense of Religion. So that besides the Shame and Sorrow, we shall have the first ill Consequence of their Miscarriages, and the Wickednesses they commit after, will, in a great Measure, be charged upon us, and put to our Account in the great Day of Judgment. And we ought to tremble to think how severely our Children and Servants will rebuke us, for being the Cause of their eternal Ruin, in not taking due Care to prevent it. In that Day, next to God, and our own Consciences, our Children and Servants will be our most terrible Accusers if we neglect to instruct them in the Way of Salvation. Let

Let us therefore resolve with Joshua, that we and our Houses will serve the Lord; that so, by God's Grace, we may by our future Care and Diligence discharge this important Duty, and repair our former Neglects. And if Children were carefully educated, and Families regularly and religiously Governed, what a happy delightful Place, what a Paradise would this World be, in Comparison of what it now is? Let these things sink into our Hearts before it is too late; and whilst the Evil may be remedied, that we may not for ever lament this Neglect, and repent of it when past Redress; for Sorrow then will be of no Use.

To Conclude, Man is an intelligent Being. As such he is made for Society. Families are the first social Connections that take place among Men. These are so constructed by the wise Appointment of Heaven, as to create a Union the most permanent and endearing. And this Union, were the Duties of it practised, would be the spiritual Source of truly noble and rational Pleasure. But alas! Sin has shaken the very Foundations of these little Societies, defaced their Beauty, and broken all their Joys. They, however, still exist, and, amidst all the Disgrace and Injury they have suffered, still exhibit Proofs of the Wisdom and Goodness of the Creator, and still remind us of the Happiness we were originally formed to enjoy.

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If, therefore, Instances can be produced of any of these Communities emerging out of the general Wreck of human Apostacy, recovering somewhat of their ancient Beauty and Glory, and becoming, in a Degree at least, wise, holy, and happy; One would be apt from thence to derive a probable Argument, in Favour of some further benevolent Intention of the great Author of all Good. Who knows, but these domestic Pleasures, springing from the pure Source of genuine Religion, may be Presages of more noble Pleasures to be enjoyed hereafter? Perhaps the Peace, Order, Love and Friendship restored here, are the early Dawn of future and everlasting Glory.

Let us enquire, therefore, how we have hitherto conducted ourselves in our several Stations here below.

As Parents, have we brought up our Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord? Have we instructed them in the Way wherein they should go, and restrained their Feet from every evil Path?

As Masters, have we dedicated our House to God? Have we vowed to Heaven that Vice shall not dwell amongst us? Have we nobly resolved to exert the Authority of Kings and Priests in these little Common-Wealths over which we preside? Do we sternly frown upon Sin? and tenderly cherish every Appearance of Virtue and Religion? Do we devoutly officiate regularly

larly at the Altars we have set up in our Houses? And is it our Aim to enforce our Instructions by our Example? Be we assured, when we lay down our Office as Kings and Priests on Earth, we shall instantly resume these Characters, but with infinitely greater Dignity and Splendour in the World to come.

Do ye, who are the Partners of our Cares and Joys, do ye concur in all our active and generous Concern for the Welfare of our Families? Does the Happiness of your Offspring and your Servants, in this World, and in that to come, lie near your Hearts? Do you bring up your Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord? Do you endeavour to sow the early Seeds of Piety in their Breast? Do you counsel, encourage, and reprove them? Do you weep over them, and pray for them? Is it your Wish to mingle Simplicity with Prudence, Gentleness with Authority, and Cheerfulness with Seriousness, in all your Deportment? Be assured ye shall e're long, "rest from your Labours, and your Works will follow you." There are Mansions preparing for you above, and therein shall you be everlastingly happy.

Ye Children, do you obey your Parents in the Lord? Do you dwell together in Unity? Do you meekly bear with one another, tenderly sympathize with one another, and cordially assist one another? Is it your

Wish

With to make some Recompence to those whose anxious Care has led you up into Life, by copying after the holy Examples they have set you? And is this your filial Duty cherished and improved by a prevailing Sense in your Breasts of the Duty you owe to your Father in Heaven? Be assured, ye shall at Death be received again to your Parents' Embraces, and with them enjoy mutual Pleasures in the highest Perfection.

Ye Servants, whom Providence hath directed to these pious Houses that you might receive a new and divine Life: have you from the noblest Motives ministered to them who have ministered to you? Have Humility, Faithfulness, Diligence, and Cheerfulness marked your Conduct; reflected Credit on your Christian Profession; and entitled you to the Friendship of those you have served? Be assured that "of the Lord ye shall receive the Reward of the Inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ."

The public Walk of Life affords innumerable Occasions of Self-examination and Trial. But would Men bring their Tempers and Conduct to the Tests which domestic Intercourses furnish, these would, doubtless, suffice to throw a Light upon their real Characters. Is all that sweet Peace, that smiling Content, that tender Sympathy, that generous Friendship which prevails in a virtuous Family congenial to your Souls?

Do you prefer the inſtructive and entertaining Diſcourſe that perfumes the Tabernacles of the righteous, above all the boaſted Joys that abound in the Tents of Sin? With cordial Pleaſure do you unite with the Excellent of the Earth, in their returning Exerciſes of Devotion? In fine, is a Name and a Place, in ſuch a Houſe as this, more envied by you than the moſt ſhining Stations in the Courts of Princes? Then, doubtleſs, you are related to the happy Family above, Manſions are preparing there for your Reception, and Angels are waiting to conduct you to your wiſhed for Home.

Let us, therefore, upon the Whole, expreſs our Gratitude to the great Author of all theſe our glorious Hopes, in every poſſible Way that Duty and Love can dictate.

How vaſt, how immenſe, how inconceivable is the Love of God! He made us reaſonable Beings. He formed us for the Duties and Pleaſures of ſocial Life. He eſtabliſhed domeſtic Connections. He bound us to himſelf and to one another by Bands the moſt firm and endearing. But Pride and Rebellion burſt theſe Bonds aſunder. The Author of our Happineſs abandoned the Manſion He had built. Sin with all her deformed and wretched Train entered, And in the Dwelling where the oppoſite Graces had ſweetly reigned, Strife, Envy, Diſcontent, Malevolence, and Miſe-

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ry have displayed their Horrors. But, O! amazing Grace! the Father of Mercies pitied us. He sent his Son to vindicate the Rights of Justice, to extirpate Satan from the Seat he had usurped, and to restore Harmony and Love to the Habitations his Spirit had defaced. The Prince of Peace arrayed himself in mortal Flesh, and wept, and bled, and died, to compass these great Ends. His Object he has attained. Families emerge from the Ruins of human Apostacy, recover in a Degree even here their original Simplicity, Beauty, and Glory, and will in Time acquire their utmost Height of Splendour and Perfection in the World above. What amazing Grace is this! Rejoice, O Heavens, and be astonished, O Earth! let every Bosom that receives these Tidings, exult with Joy!

But amidst the Joy we feel, let us not lose Sight of those Returns of Duty which this unexampled Grace demands. There are many Ways of expressing our Gratitude, and this of a cheerful persevering Attention to domestic Duties is not the least. Have we thrown open the Doors of our Hearts, and hailed the King of Glory to come in? Let us consecrate our Houses also to his Service. Let the fragrant Incense of Prayer and Praise daily ascend to Heaven. Let all our Actions, Intercourses and Pleasures be regulated by his Will. And to his Honour let our Knowledge, Sub-

ſtance, Influence, Example, and all, be devoted. So ſhall we have the refined, extatic, god-like Pleaſure of forwarding the great and good Deſign the Father of Mercies has adopted, even that of reſcuing our Children, Servants, and Connections from impending Ruin; forming them for the ſeveral Stations they are to fill in Life; and introducing them at length to the unutterable Joys of Heaven. — In a Word,

How great is the Condeſcenſion and Goodneſs of the ever-bleſſed God, in deigning to dwell under our humble Roofs!

Will he indeed, whom the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain, take up his Abode with Men? What Heart among us but glows with Gratitude and Love at theſe joyful Tidings! Let us, therefore, at the Head of our ſeveral Families, in a Tranſport of devout Affection, welcome this kind and generous Gueſt into our Houſes. Let us give him the Entertainment he demands, even that of cordial Love and unreſerved Obedience. Let us preſent him the Sacrifices he requires, even thoſe of daily Prayer and Praiſe; and tremble at the Thought of ſo demeaning ourſelves in the Habitations he has thus honoured, as ever to provoke him to depart thence.

If the Preſence of God with his People here renders their Dwellings ſo light, ſecure, and happy; how glori-

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ous must that House be which he has prepared for their Reception hereafter!

It has often been observed that an Habitation wherein Virtue, Friendship, and Piety reign, is a lively emblem of the heavenly State. But the latter infinitely excels the former. That House on Earth which is most devoted to God, has yet more or less of Imperfection, Sorrow, and Sin in it. But these Evils are held at an eternal Distance from those bright Mansions, in which our heavenly Father resides above. There, in due Time, his whole Family whom he hath redeemed with the Blood of his Son, will be assembled together. The most perfect Knowledge, Purity, and Love, will prevail among them. His Presence, without an intervening Cloud, will gladden all their Hearts. And in the Character of Kings and Priests they will be employed in Acts of the most exalted and rapturous Devotion, to him that sits on the Throne, and to the Lamb, for ever more.

SERMON CCCCIII.

On Family-Worship.

Josh. xxiv. 15. ——As for me and my House, "we will serve the Lord."

Having already grounded on these Words the great Duty of Family-Religion, we shall now, as equally applicable, enforce from them, that of Family-Worship.

The same Arguments that establish Public Worship in the Church, hold proportionably for Private; because every Family is a little Church or Congregation of Christians, collected under the same Roof: so St. Paul expressly calls it. (*) The Priest, or Minister of this particular Church is the Father or Ruler of the Family, whose Right and Authority is founded upon the Law of Nature. Accordingly we find it exercised in the Patriarchal Times; for Noah, upon his first going out of the Ark, "built an Altar, and offered Burnt-Offerings upon it, with his Children." Abraham was commanded to offer up his Son Isaac in Sacrifice. And Job offered up a Burnt-Offering for each of his Children. It

(*) Rom. xvi. 5.

It is by Virtue of this Trust, that every Father and Master of a Family is responsible to God for the Performance of Divine Worship within his little Jurisdiction. Joshua understood it thus, and resolved to discharge his Conscience. And God himself vouches for Abraham's faithful Performance of this Office.

As a Priest, therefore, of the Church in his own House, the Nature of his Office requires every Father and Ruler of a Family to offer up some Sacrifice, and to perform some solemn Worship with his Household; and this, among Christians, can be nothing but those spiritual Sacrifices of Prayer and Thanksgiving, which are most acceptable to God. — In Order to persuade Christians to the Discharge of this Duty, of which we have here so happy an Example, we shall endeavour,

First, To establish the general Proposition, that it is the Duty of every Family, in their own separate Habitation, to offer daily Prayer and Praise to God.

Secondly, The Reasonableness of this Duty, and our Obligations to it.

Thirdly, I shall lay down certain Rules for the rightly conducting of this Service. And then

Lastly, Obviate the principal Difficulties that may discourage Persons from an Attention to it.

First, We are to prove in general, that it is the Duty of every Family, in their own separate Hav

bitation, to offer daily Prayer and Praise to God.

It is the Business of every Man, within the Compass of his Abilities, to promote the Honour of God; and consequently, of every Head of a Family to warm those that are beneath him, with a Sense of Religion, and to see, that nothing, as far as the Sphere of his Power extends, be "hid from the Heat thereof."

If, then, to instruct your Family in religious Duties, and to pray fervently with them, as well as for them, would be of any Service to promote Piety; if every Man ought to promote Piety, as much as he can, in the Station in which God has placed him: then it is the Province allotted you, as the Head of it, to "walk (as the Scripture expresseth it) in your House with a perfect Heart," and by your Example to "provoke" them, (the only Way One would willingly provoke any Person) "to Love and good Works."

You may say, it is true, Prayers at periodical and stated Times are necessary to revive those Impressions of the Deity, which would otherwise be effaced by the Business or Pleasures of Life; it is requisite to shift the Scene, and to commune with the Father of Spirits, to prevent that Distaste for, and Deadness of Affection to, heavenly things, which a continual Intercourse with sensible Objects would otherwise occasion. But why, you'll say, may not this be done in the Closet? What Occasion is there for Family-Prayer? To

To this we anſwer, that this is to make a wrong Eſtimate of things; it is to conſider your Family diſtinct by themſelves, as entirely conſiſting of Perſons, who have a competent Knowledge how they ought to pray, and a thorough Inclination to perform it, which is far from being the Caſe; it is to conſider them, as what One could wiſh them to be, inſtead of what in Reality they are: it is to argue from Theory to Fact.

It is granted, that Men of a ſober dipaſſionate Reaſon will reflect, that, if they live, as it were, without a God in this World, without ever praiſing and adoring him; they muſt expect to be ſeparated from him for-ever. But then it ſhould be granted too, that the Bulk of Families will not be at this Expence of Reflection: and if you would bring them to a juſt Senſe and right Apprehenſion of theſe things, you muſt light-up Devotion in their Breaſts by your Inſtruction and Example.

For when they ſee you employing, and teaching them to employ the nobleſt Principles of the Soul, Love and Gratitude, upon God the nobleſt of Beings; when they ſee you warmly affected with a Senſe of what you are doing; proportionably to the Value and Importance of the things you pray for; they who are thus commodiouſly placed under the direct Influence of ſuch a burning and ſhining Light, will be diſpoſed to catch the Flame from you, and to feel their Breaſts,

if they are ſuſceptible of good Impreſſions, burn within them with the ſame generous Ardour. Beſides,

The ſame united Devotion of a whole Family acting in Concert will be more effectual, than the ſolitary Prayers of any ſingle Member when detached from the whole Body; as they have a tendency to beget in others a correſpondent Piety, to propagate the Flame from Breaſt to Breaſt, and to encourage, countenance, and give a Sanction to exemplary Holineſs: but chiefly, becauſe God has promiſed, that "where two or three are gathered together, He will be in the midſt of them."

It is a beautiful and amiable Sight to behold a well-regulated Society, glorifying God with one Heart and one Mouth, cancelling their former Sins by Repentance, and forming ſettled Reſolutions of Obedience for the future.

Add to this, that the joint Devotions of a Family are as neceſſary to derive a Bleſſing upon a Family, and to return Thanks for Bleſſings already received; as the Applications of each Individual are to beg of God, or to thank him for his own perſonal Advantages.

If ever, then, you would have your Children to be dutiful, and your Servants faithful; if ever you deſire your ſmall Community here ſhould join hereafter with the great Congregation of Men and Angels in Heaven, be ſure to cultivate the Spot of Ground committed to

your Care, teach them to look up to God in every Step of their Conduct, impreſs upon them, and keep alive in them, by repeated Prayers, a manly, ſerious, and devout Frame of Mind; and ſet apart ſome Portion of the Sabbath to read, or hear them read, ſuch good Books, as may inſtruct them in the ſtrong and deciſive Evidence of Chriſtianity, the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God in the great Work of their Redemption, and the whole Compaſs of their Duty. From a Neglect of doing this, it comes to paſs, that our Youth, as ſoon as they launch out into the World, fall an eaſy defenceleſs Prey to thoſe Profeſſors of Iniquity, who "go about ſeeking whom they may devour;" that they become Proſelytes from the beſt Religion the World was ever bleſſed with, to no Religion at all; and that thoſe who ſhould be the Flower of the Nation, are too often the very Dregs of it.

You think it a Duty incumbent upon you, to let Charity begin at Home, in furniſhing your Family with their bodily Suſtenance: and is it not much more your indiſpenſible Duty, as Eternity is of infinitely greater Concern, to make Proviſion for their ſpiritual Well-being? "He is worſe than an Infidel, who doth not provide for his own Houſe" in this Reſpect, as well as the other, who doth not take care to make them happy in themſelves, ſerviceable to the World, and acceptable to God. (Serm. CCCCIII.) To

To compaſs this End, the ſpiritual Nouriſhment of your Family, it is not enough, tho That ſhould by no Means be omitted, that you inſtruct them in the Duty of Prayer. Inſtructions are but Virtue ſet before them in Theory; which, tho' a lovely Form in the Eye of abſtract Thinkers, yet is too delicate to make any ſtrong Impreſſions upon the Groſs of Mankind, who muſt be affected by what is ſenſible. Not to add, that where the real Practice is not exhibited, even the Theory itſelf will but too naturally be neglected; for, where the abſtract Reaſoning, only, is not ſufficient to produce Practice, it can be but light; and conſequently, will of itſelf ſoon die away: whereas your own good Example is Virtue realized, and brought down to their Senſes, with all its attractive Charms; it is Piety incarnate, and we behold its external Glory, full of Grace and Truth. Theory and Practice confirm and ſtrengthen each other, both in the Parties themſelves, and thoſe who hear or behold them.

It is not difficult to convince Men of the Reaſonableneſs of Prayer: all the Difficulty lies in engaging them to the Practice of it. And as long as the Deſire of Imitation is confeſſedly a ſtrong Principle of Action, One bright domeſtic Pattern in a Perſon of ſuperior Character and Authority, ſhewing ſuch a diſtinguiſhed Regard to the Deity, that Morning and Evening

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come not more conſtantly in their Courſe, than his ſtated Hours of calling his Family to Devotion, will have more Effect upon all beneath him and about him, than a thouſand dry Inſtructions without it, which will operate but faintly in Compariſon. By the one you only point out their Duty, but by the other (joining with them in Prayer) you call it forth into Action: and ſo help to raiſe a Soul, which before was cleaving to the Duſt. By ſo often ſeeing the conſpicuous Luſtre of your Goodneſs, they will be led to the approving it; and from approving, to imitating it; and from imitating it, to be "not only almoſt, but altogether ſuch as you are." — This Duty, thus explained, we proceed,

Secondly, To ſhew the Reaſonableneſs of it, and our Obligations to it.

It is a plain Dictate of Nature, – It hath been generally acknowledged to be ſo, – evident Traces we have of the Practice in Scripture to this Purpoſe, – it is there enjoined us, – and many great Advantages do really reſult from it.

When we properly reflect upon the Duty of Prayer, what can be ſo truly becoming a dependant State, as to pay our adoring Homage to the Author of all Perfection, and to profeſs our devoted Allegience to the Almighty Governor of the Univerſe? Can there be a

more ſublime Pleaſure than to dwell in fixed Contemplation on the Beauties of the Eternal Mind? Can there be a more advantageous Employ than to preſent our Requeſts to the Father of Mercies, through Chriſt, the Author of all Comforts? — But, to Particulars.

1ſt. Family-worſhip is a plain Dictate of Nature. Whoever believes there is a God, muſt admit that he ought to be worſhipped. This is the Duty of every Individual: for if God is a Being poſſeſſed of all poſſible Perfection, if we owe our Exiſtence, Preſervation, and Happineſs to his Favour; and if he has made us reaſonable Creatures, capable of contemplating his infinite Excellencies, and our own conſtant Dependence on him, and Obligations to him; it is certainly moſt fit and right that we pay devout Homage to him. No intelligent Being can be exempt from this Duty. But Man was made for Society, and as ſocial Connections are of divine Appointment, it is a Dictate of Nature that God ſhould be worſhipped in ſuch Connections; and the rather, as the uniting in theſe delightful and improving Exerciſes, hath a happy Effect to excite and promote the genuine Spirit of Devotion.

Now, Family-Connections are the firſt and moſt important Ones in Society. They are founded in the Law of Nature, as is evident from God's having created Man male and female, – from the Inſtitution of Mar-

Marriage, and the various Relations that reſult thence. Mankind, therefore, have ſubſiſted in this Form from the Beginning, and all over the Earth. They are thus united by the ſtrongeſt Bands of Affection and Intereſt, the principal Pleaſures of Life ariſe out of theſe Connections, and from thence, too, originate all other Societies, both civil and religious.

Can it, then, be doubted that it is the Will of God, the great Parent of the Univerſe, that his numerous Offspring, thus diſtributed into an infinite Number of little Societies, ſhould each, in their own ſeparate Habitation, offer daily Prayer and Praiſe to Him?

2dly, This Idea has generally prevailed in the World.

The Greeks and Romans had their PENATES and their LARES, (i.e) their Houſehold-Gods which they kept with great Attention and Reſpect in an inner Room of their Houſes, or perhaps ſome Kind of SACELLUM or little Chappel conſecrated for that Purpoſe. And theſe tutelar Deities they worſhipped, both ſtatedly and occaſionally, with no ſmall Homage and Ceremony. (*) Nor

(*) The *Penates* and *Lares* are diſtinguiſhable from each other. The former were Images of the Gods, ſuch as *Juno*, *Minerva*, &c. And the latter ſeem to have been Repreſentations of their Anceſtors, who were ſuppoſed after their Deceaſe to be attentive to the Intereſts of their Families. As to the Kind of Worſhip that was paid them, we have many Intimations in the Greek and Roman Poets, &c.

Nor can it be doubted that ſimilar Practices obtained in other Countries, and in very early Times. This is evident from the Story of RACHEAL, who, when ſhe left the Houſe of her Father LABAN the Syrian, carried away his Houſehold-Gods with her; (*) as alſo from that of MICAH, ſo particularly related in the Book of Judges. (†) With Reſpect to the latter, he had not only his graven Image, Ephod, Teraphim, and molten Image, but a young Man, a Levite, for his Prieſt. And when the DANITES took away from him theſe his Houſehold-Gods, they perſuaded the Prieſt to go with them, telling him it would be more for his Advantage to be Prieſt to a Tribe than to the Houſe of one Man.

It is admitted, indeed, that theſe People were Idolators, and had wretchedly mutilated and depraved the true Religion; yet it is clear from the Facts juſt related, they held it as their indiſpenſible Duty, not only to worſhip God publickly, but alſo in their own ſeparate Habitations. 3dly,

When *Dido* entertains *Æneas*, among other Ceremonies, Incenſe is offered to the *Penates*.

Quinquaginta intùs Famulæ, quibus Ordine longo
Cura Penum ſtruere, et Flammis adolere Penates.

And *Terence*, in his *Phormio*, brings in *Demipho* as ſaying,

——— At ego
Dîos Penates hinc ſalutatum Domum
Divortar. ——— ———

(*) Gen. xxxi. 30. (†) Judges 17th, and 18th Chap.

ſtly, We have many Inſtances in Scripture of good Men who paid a ſerious Regard to this Duty.

The honourable Teſtimony which God himſelf was pleaſed to give to the Piety of Abraham, that "He knew him, that he would command his Children and his Houſehold after him, to keep the Way of the Lord, and to do Juſtice and Judgment;" puts it beyond a reaſonable Doubt that Religious Worſhip was regularly obſerved in his Family.

The Altars which Iſaac and Jacob erected in Beerſheba and Bethel, where they pitched their Tents, and called upon the Name of the Lord, are ſtriking Monuments of their devout Attention to this Duty.

The Patriarch Job, anxious for the Welfare of his Family, is ſaid to have "ſanctified his Children, riſing up early in the Morning, and offering Burnt-offerings, according to the Number of them: and this he did continually."

The pious Reſolution which Joſhua, in the Text, formed, and in which his Family united with him, evidently includes the Idea of Religious Worſhip in its Kind. "As for me, and my Houſe, we will ſerve the Lord."

When David had brought up the Ark of the Lord from the Houſe of Obed-edom to the Tabernacle he had pitched for it, "he returned (it is ſaid) to bleſs his Houſehold." And as "he walked in his Houſe with

a perfect Heart;" "Morning, Noon, and Night, praying;" yea and "ſeven Times a Day praiſing God;" ſo his Family, doubtleſs, joined him in ſome at leaſt, if not in all theſe devout Exerciſes.

In ſhort, from many Circumſtances, too numerous to be mentioned, it may, we think, be fairly inferred that this was a common Practice among the pious Iſraelites.

In the New Teſtament we find our Lord frequently praying with his Apoſtles, whom he conſidered as his Family. Nor can we think of the Fellowſhip there was among the primitive Chriſtians in their ſeveral Houſes at Jeruſalem, and elſewhere, without concluding that the Duties of ſocial Worſhip were daily practiſed in them. But there is one ſtriking Inſtance we muſt not forget to mention, [viz] that of Cornelius, "who, as he feared God with all his Houſe, and gave much Alms to the People, ſo he prayed to God alway," (i.e) at all proper Seaſons: and was actually "praying in his Houſe," (i.e) with his Family, (as the Word often ſignifies) when an Angel was ſent to him.

"But with us, how many of thoſe who are called Chriſtians, are Strangers to Prayer! how many Servants riſe to their Labour, and never bend a Knee to their Maſter in Heaven! how many Maſters ſet their Servants an ungodly Example, by entering on the Af-

fairs of the Day, without imploring the God of all Grace, either to ſanctify their Souls, or to proſper their Buſineſs! how many Parents neither pray for themſelves, nor for the Converſion of their Children! and how many Children are quite ignorant of the Nature, the Neceſſity, and Advantages of Prayer! — It is alſo to be lamented that many Families who hear the Goſpel, have no Family-Altar for God! and even thoſe who have, how often is Family-Worſhip carried on in a cold and careleſs Manner!

From the Examples thus given, and the Reverſe of them in MODERN Practice, we proceed,

4thly, To certain Admonitions which may with good Reaſon be conſidered as enjoing this Duty upon us.

Family-Worſhip conſiſts of Prayer, Praiſe, and Inſtruction. — As to the firſt of theſe, we are commanded to "pray always, with all Prayer and Supplication." And can it be doubted that Family-prayer, a Duty ſo conſonant with the Dictates of Nature and Reaſon, is included in this Precept? When the Apoſtle had been exhorting the ſeveral Members which compoſe Chriſtian Families, to the Duties they owe each other, he immediately adds, "continue in Prayer, and watch in the ſame with Thankſgiving." As if he had ſaid, "Pray earneſtly to God from Day to Day in your ſeveral Families, for Grace to enable you to ful-

fil the Duties resulting from your Relation to one another: and be thankful to your Father who is in Heaven for all the domestic Happiness you enjoy." — As to Praise, he exhorts the Colossians, in the same Epistle, to "teach and admonish one another in Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs: singing, and making Melody in their Hearts unto the Lord." A Mode of Expression which may as properly be understood to refer to Family as to more public Connections; for "the Voice of Rejoicing and Salvation," the Psalmist tells us, "is in the Tabernacles of the Righteous." And then, as to the Duty of reading the Scriptures, and instructing our Children and Servants; it would be endless to repeat the many Exhortations of this Kind which occur in the Bible. They may, however, all of them be comprehended in That of Moses to the Heads of Families among the Israelites; "These Words which I command thee this Day, shall be in thine Heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy Children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine House." — And now, if God has declared that "he loves the Dwellings of Jacob;" that, when he shall pour upon the House of David, and the Inhabitants of Jerusalem, a Spirit of Grace and Supplication, "every Family shall mourn apart;" and that in that Day "he will create a Glory upon every Dwelling-

place of Mount Zion;" and if, on the contrary, he has threatened that "he will pour out his Fury upon the Heathen that know him not, and upon the Families that call not upon his Name;" it can, surely, no longer remain a Queſtion, that it is our indiſpenſible Duty, in our ſeveral Habitations, to offer Prayer and Praiſe to God.

It will be aſked, perhaps, Where is there a direct poſitive Command, requiring Families to aſſemble together, Morning and Evening, to worſhip God in their own Houſes? We anſwer: the exact Time is left to every One's Prudence to determine: That therefore is not a Part of the preſent Queſtion. But as to Family-Worſhip in general, it being a plain Dictate of Nature, it was rather to be expected that it ſhould be frequently adverted to in Scripture as an acknowledged Duty, than held up to View in a diſtinct abſtract Propoſition. It is, you have ſeen, manifeſtly included in general Precepts, and clearly deducible from an infinite Variety of Circumſtances which it would be endleſs to enumerate. Can any Maſter of a Family, then, conſcientiouſly ſay, he verily believes God has required no ſuch Duty of him? — But to all that has been ſaid we muſt add,

Laſtly, The great Utility of Family-Worſhip.

This is an Argument addreſſed to Intereſt, a Paſ-

ſion that prevails in every human Breaſt. If therefore it ſhall be found on ſober Reflection that the temporal Proſperity of a Family, its morals, Piety, and ſocial Happineſs, are all affected and promoted by the proper Diſcharge of this Duty; ſurely nothing but a criminal Diſaffection to Religion will account for that ſhameful Neglect of it which ſo much prevails in the World.

What Man is there who does not wiſh to dwell ſecurely in his Habitation, to have the Bleſſings of Life and Health around him? The Enjoyment of theſe Bleſſings, be our Prudence, Induſtry, and Œconomy what they may, depends on the Favour of indulgent Providence. Regard therefore to that Providence is a plain Dictate of Nature, and a lively Expreſſion of it in our Family-Connection cannot but be pleaſing to God. How then can we expect that the Shepherd of Iſrael ſhould watch around our Tents by Night, and command his Bleſſing on the Labours and Enjoyments of the Day, if the Voice of Prayer is never heard in our Dwellings, and the grateful Incenſe of Praiſe never aſcends to heaven under our Roof? His Sun, indeed, ſhines, and his Rain falls upon the Evil as well as the Good. Yet, doubtleſs, the Omiſſion of ſo plain a Duty, ſhould beget in the Minds of Men, if they were not loſt to all Senſe of Reaſon and Religion,

not

a painful Jealouſy that Providence might poſſibly forſake them." This, however, is certain, they hereby deprive themſelves of many a pleaſing Reflection, which directly tends to mitigate the Evils, and ſweeten the Pleaſures of domeſtic Life.

On the good Morals of the ſeveral Members of a Family, the Safety, Peace, Honour, and Welfare of the Whole depend. What miſerable Diſorder, Animoſity, and ſometimes Poverty too, enter thoſe Houſes from whence Truth, Decency, and Sobriety depart! The Authority of Parents is trampled under-foot by the lawleſs Extravagance of diſſolute Children, the Subſtance of the Family is waſted in Wantonneſs and Riot; Servants of no Principle become Maſters, or, if they have any Senſe of Duty, are held at the abject Diſtance of Slaves, and the whole Houſe exhibits one ſad Scene of Hatred, Jealouſy, Confuſion, and Wretchedneſs. What ſober Man but ſhudders at the very Idea of theſe Evils!

But do theſe Evils prevail in the Habitations conſecrated to the Service of God? A Form of Religion there may be where is not the Power, and ſecret Villany may in ſome few Inſtances be cloaked under the ſpecious Pretext of Family-Devotion. But where the Heads of Families do, upon Principle, maintain regularly the Worſhip of God in their Houſes, we may be-

bold to affirm Vice will not reign triumphant there. At the Voice of Prayer the wretched Demon will depart, I ſhould rather have ſaid, will forbear to enter.

As the right Diſcharge of this Duty will oblige thoſe who preſide in Families to lead virtuous Lives themſelves, ſo it will have a happy Effect to ſecure the Reverence & Affection of thoſe committed to their Care. And! How pleaſing to ſee thoſe excellent Morals exemplified in the Tempers and Conduct of Superiors and Inferiors, which their daily mutual Prayers and Praiſes lay them under the ſtrongeſt Obligation to cultivate and maintain!

The Piety of a Family too will hereby be not a little promoted. The ardent Prayers of devout Parents encircled by their Offspring at the Feet of Divine Mercy, have ſometimes fixed an abiding Impreſſion of the Truth and Importance of Religion upon their tender Hearts. And Inſtances might be mentioned of Servants who, by their Attendance on theſe Duties, have been awakened to a ſerious Concern for the Salvation of their Souls. And however theſe Services, thro various Cauſes, are not always performed with the like Fervour and Affection, yet there are few who have entered into the Spirit of Religion but will acknowledge, that a Flame of pure Devotion has been ſometimes kindled in their Breaſts on theſe Occaſions,

and

and the Effect has often been considerable, to restrain them from Sin, and to prompt them to Holiness.

And, With Regard to the World, (if THAT Motive may be admitted) it will procure Credit, Esteem and Honour. A Family, noted for Religion, can never want the Confidence and good Offices of all Men.

This constant Regard to God in Family-worship will be found, where the Master or Governor has any Sense of Religion upon his Heart. — In fine,

Let a vain and giddy World, under the Prejudices of depraved Nature, conceive unfavourably, if they will, of the Duty we have been recommending — conceive of it as inimical to Cheerfulness and Pleasure; the Reverse, we may venture to affirm, is the Case. What more directly tends to banish Fear, Gloominess, and Melancholy from our Dwellings, than the daily imploring the Protection and Blessing of Providence, and the Approbation and Smiles of divine Grace! What Sound can there possibly be so cheerful and enlivening as "the Voice of Rejoicing and Salvation in the Tabernacles of the Righteous!" What Friendships so firm, what Attachments so cordial, and what domestic Joys so highly flavoured, as those which are instituted, improved, and kept alive by a genuine Sense of Religion! Go into the Families where Good-nature, good Sense, and Piety reign, where they mutually sup-

port and promote each other; and ſay whether Happineſs is not to be found there. You will not, indeed, be diſturbed with that loud unmeaning Kind of Laughter which characteriſes Fools, and is as the Crackling of Thorns under the Pot. But you will ſee Sweetneſs, Serenity and Cheerfulneſs, in the Countenances of all around you; you will hear ſuch Diſcourſe as is entertaining and improving; and you will be the admiring Witneſs of a thouſand Acts of the moſt endearing Friendſhip and Love.

There may, indeed, after all, be ſome little Singularities cleaving to Men of diſtinguiſhed Piety, which thoſe "who ſit in the Seat of the Scornful" ſeldom fail to make the ſtanding Mark of their Raillery.

But the Queſtion is, whether, when we come to die, we would chuſe to be of the Number of thoſe who have been moſt charitable and devout, tho' over-ſcrupulous, and to have our "Lot among the Saints;" or of thoſe who have lived in an open flagrant Neglect of the Deity, as if He, the Father of Beings, were the only Being with whom they were reſolved to have nothing to do?

A thouſand little Weakneſſes in acting and thinking will eaſily be forgiven in thoſe who have meant well, and have to the beſt of their Power acted up to that honeſt Meaning; a Senſe of their Infirmities begetting in them a due Humility, and Humility "covering a Multitude",

titude" of pitiable Infirmities. But Faults committed with an high Hand, and from an haughty Heart, Faults proceeding from a diſdainful Irreverence and a ſtubborn Diſobedience to the Fountain of all Good, and therefore the Object of all Duty, who has the juſteſt Claim to every Inſtance of our Obedience, are much more unpardonable than all the little Frailties incident to human Nature, if they met together in one Subject. The Laughter of Fools may ſoon be no more; and then we ſhall be ſenſible (why are we not ſo now!) that it is infinitely better to be for a while ridiculous for our Infirmities, than to be odious, perhaps even here, for our Vices, and miſerable forever. — Upon the Whole,

Every Maſter of a Family is anſwerable to God for the Welfare of thoſe Souls, that are under his Care: nor can it well be underſtood how a Senſe of Religion can be maintained in a Family without the Exerciſe of daily Devotion in it. Families are but little Societies, as Societies are but larger Families; and therefore Religion, which is confeſſedly the beſt Bond and Cement of Union in States and larger Communities, is likewiſe ſo in little domeſtic Governments. It is therefore incumbent upon thoſe, who preſide over a Family, to impreſs a Senſe of Religion upon thoſe, who are beneath them; for, by this Method they will be beſt able to confirm and eſtabliſh their Children and Servants in the Practice of Chriſtian Obligations. Sermon

SERMON CCCCIV.

On the same Subject.

Rules for rightly conducting it, &c.

Josh. xxiv. 15. "—— As for me and my House, "we will serve the Lord."

Having considered our Obligations to the Practice of Family-Worship, we now proceed,

Secondly, To lay down certain Rules for the right conducting this delightful and improving Exercise.

And here, — It will be proper to observe, that the Rules we have to propose are chiefly of a prudential Kind, and are therefore meant to be submitted, with all due Caution and Deference, to the Judgment and Discretion of those who preside in Families. Indeed, some of them will be founded on Intimations occasionally to be met with in Scripture: and, if the Scriptures are silent as to the rest, it will not be wondered at, since the Circumstances of Families widely differ, and of what is merely accidental to this Duty, must be left to Conscience and Prudence to adjust, according to the Nature of the Case. — Now,

The

The Rules we ſhall lay down will refer to – the Seaſon allotted for Family-Worſhip – the Service itſelf - and our Behaviour in it.

1ſt. We begin with the Seaſon allotted for Family-Worſhip.

There certainly ſhould be ſome fixed ſtated Time for this Duty: its Importance, doubtleſs, demands this. Shall we have fixed Times for our various civil Buſineſſes; and no fixed Seaſon for worſhipping God? On urgent Occaſions it may be neceſſary to depart from the eſtabliſhed Rule. But if there be no certain known Time, it is much if the Service is not every now and then omitted; or, however, it is probable the Family will often be ſo diſperſed, as not to be eaſily called together. On the contrary, Regularity will, in many Reſpects, have a very good Effect. The Hour of Prayer being expected, the Affairs of the Houſe will be put into ſuch a Train, as that few, if any will be hindered from attending. The haſty Manner in which this Duty is too often performed, where no Regard is had to fixed Time, will be prevented. And indeed an Attention to this one Point, will have no ſmall Influence on the orderly Management of all the other Buſineſſes of the Day.

What the exact Hour ſhould be, every Family muſt determine for itſelf. The Profeſſion, Occupation,

Health, Number, and Avocations of a Family are all Circumſtances which conſiderably affect this Queſtion. But, for various Reaſons, it ſeems highly fit that God ſhould be worſhipped Mornings and Evenings. This Idea ſtrikes moſt ſerious People in Regard of private Prayer. How natural when we riſe from our Beds in the Morning, and our Faculties are in the moſt lively State, to offer Thanks to God for the Protection and Reſt of the Night! And how natural in the Evening, to acknowledge the Mercies of the Day, to confeſs the Sins and Follies of it, and to commend ourſelves to the Care of divine Providence thro the Night.

So ſenſible were the Pagans themſelves of the Fitneſs of theſe Seaſons for Religious-Worſhip, that One of their Philoſophers ſays, "At the Riſing and Setting of the Sun and Moon, we might ſee and hear both GREEKS and BARBARIANS, all of them, whether in Adverſity or Proſperity, proſtrating themſelves and making Supplication." (*) The PYTHAGOREANS were uſed to retire in the Morning by themſelves, and then meet together in ſome Place proper for Devotion, and at Night to recollect the Actions of the Day before they went to Sleep. (‡) David and Daniel, we know, were accuſtomed to offer Prayer and Praiſe at theſe Seaſons. (†) If

(*) Plato de Legibus. lib. 10.

(‡) See Gales Court of the Gentiles. Part. ii. Book 2. Ch. 6.

(†) Pſal. lv. 17. Dan. vi. 10.

If then it is the Voice of Nature, that each ſhould in his ſeparate Capacity worſhip God, at the Beginning and Cloſe of the Day, the ſame Reaſoning ſeems to hold good with Reſpect to Families; not to ſay that in the Inſtances juſt mentioned, there may be a Reference to ſocial as well as to private Prayer.

As to the particular Time when this Duty is to be performed both Mornings and Evenings, with other prudential Matters reſpecting it, we have already treated. (*) Therefore,

Secondly, Of what Chriſtian Prudence and Piety dictate reſpecting the Service itſelf; which conſiſts of Prayer, Praiſe, and Inſtruction: theſe we have already proved. (‡) Our Object now is to ſhew how theſe ſeveral Parts of Family-worſhip may be moſt profitably performed. And,

1ſt. Of Prayer. This will lie upon the Maſter of the Family, or upon ſome other Perſon properly qualified who happens to be preſent. The Objection which has been often urged to this Duty, ariſing from the Want of proper Talents for the diſcharging it acceptably and profitably, we ſhall largely examine hereafter. What we have here in View is, to offer Advice to thoſe ſerious People who have got over this Difficulty, and do practiſe this Duty in their Families. Candid

(*) Page 193, 194. (‡) Page 223.

Candid and close Attention, is necessary to the Particulars we shall here observe. Much depends upon it. When you go down on your Knees, remember that you are in the Presence of Almighty God, that you are the Representative, as it were, of your whole Family; and that the proper or improper Discharge of this Duty will be likely to have an important Effect on their Temper and Conduct. Be, therefore, serious, and self-collected. Do not hurry over the Service in a thoughtless, negligent, customary Manner. If you do, you not only offend God, but unhappily contribute to the habituating those around you to a careless trifling Mode of Treatment of divine things. — Give full Scope to that genuine Flame of Devotion which may on some Occasions especially be excited in your Breast. But take heed that you do not launch out into such Extravagancies of Expression as will not fail, instead of edifying, to disgust those who hear you. — Let your Language be plain and intelligible, that the dullest Capacities in your House may not be at a loss to comprehend your Meaning. — Some general Method observed in the ordering your Prayer, will contribute not a little to Edification. — Consider the Circumstances of your Family, and suit your Petitions to their several Exigencies. — Avoid, as much as may be, a Sameness of Expression: Variety will both please, and have a great

Effect

Effect to ſecure the Attention. — And permit me to add, that Tediouſneſs ought to be particularly guarded againſt. Our Saviour, we know, earneſtly cautioned his Diſciples againſt uſing vain Repetitions, as the Heathens did, who thought they ſhould be heard for their much ſpeaking. It is true, on particular Occaſions, ſome Indulgence in Regard of the Length of Family-Prayer, may be very properly allowed: as when the Heart is more than ordinarily affected with the great things of God. A little Tranſgreſſion in Regard of Length on theſe Occaſions will be eaſily forgiven, and indeed the Fervour of Devotion that then prevails, will, it may be hoped, ſo diffuſe itſelf through the Family, as that few preſent will think the Service tedious. But on ordinary Occaſions, to draw out a Prayer to an undue Length, is extremely imprudent. How is it to be expected that the Attention of Children and Servants ſhould be held with any Pleaſure to ſuch an Exerciſe, thus conſtantly returning Morning and Evening? Indeed, it muſt be difficult for any to ſupport with Patience, under the Weight of that unſufferable Tautology which too often diſgraces theſe Services. But,

2dly, The offering of Praiſe to God is certainly another important Branch of Family-Worſhip, and may be included in the general Idea of Prayer. And ſurely,

that Heart muſt be cold indeed that can receive Favours, both eſtimable and ineſtimable, without being touched with the natural Feelings of Gratitude for them.

Here therefore, when to the many Bleſſings of this Life we add that of the Redemption of the World by our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, whereby we obtain the Means of Grace and Hopes of Glory, we may well be allowed, and ſhall really be faulty, if we do not abound in, ſome Flow and Exuberance of Expreſſion in praiſing God for them. And then,

As to Inſtruction, and reading the Scriptures for that Purpoſe, together with Books of ſound Morals and Principles in Religion, (whoſe Number are not a few in this enlightened Age, and the Preference of which muſt be according to the beſt Choice of him who preſides;) if Edification is the grand Object, and there is Prudence to direct, no Doubt ſuch Mode of Inſtruction will be adopted, as will beſt ſuit the Circumſtances of the Family. I proceed, therefore,

Thirdly, To conſider the Behaviour required of the Family in general on theſe Occaſions.

Every One in the Houſe, it is preſumed, will ſee it his Duty to attend; and we may hope, if the Service is properly conducted, will be diſpoſed to do ſo. But if any, through a total Diſaffection to Religion, ſhould treat it contemptuouſly, ſuch a depraved Member of

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the Society well deserves to be excluded from it. But there is little Danger of this in well regulated Families, where Good-nature and Authority are happily united in the Character and Deportment of those who preside over them.

All assembled, it should be the Concern of every one to behave himself with Reverence and Seriousness. How disgusting to see an Air of Indifference, if not Levity, on the Countenances of any at these Times! Such a Demeanour is very indecent, and must be highly offensive to God. The Attention should be wholly taken off from civil Concerns, and fixed with all possible Seriousness to the present Moment: (*) the Effi-

(*) When the Romans sacrificed, before the Procession went a public Crier, proclaiming aloud to the People, *Hoc age*, to give them Notice that they should attend to the Solemnity. In like Manner, our Church, to excite the Attention of her Audience more intensely, frequently, previous to her solemn Addresses to God, thus exhorts us, "Let us pray."

If we say our Prayers in a cold, supine, lifeless Manner, now and then, we know no other Effect they will have, but to enhance our Condemnation: in Effect we do not pray, we only say our Prayers; we pay not the Tribute of the Heart, but an unmeaning Form of Homage; we "draw nigh to God with our Lips, while our Heart is far from him." Praying thus, merely as a thing of Course, without any due Preparation for it, or Attention of Mind in it, will have no Influence either on God or ourselves. But if we enliven our Petitions, which are otherwise a lifeless Carcase, praying with a Sense

Efficacy of Prayer not ſo much depending on the outward Act, as that inward Frame and Diſpoſition of Mind with which we pray. And,

It would be of admirable Service to us, when we are praying, to have this Expreſſion often in our Minds; "Am I doing ſo important a Buſineſs in ſo ſlight and perfunctory a Manner; the moſt important Buſineſs of all, with Supineneſs and Indolence?"

Let us, therefore, charge it upon ourſelves to mind well the Duty we are engaging in, to hear diligently the Word that is read, and follow cloſely with our Thoughts the Petitions that are offered. To this End we ſhould remember, that we are in the immediate Preſence of the great God, who cannot be deceived, and will not be mocked; and who, as he has required this Service at our Hands, ſo has he therein conſulted our real Good.

Nor are Decency and Attention only required of us in theſe Matters; Our Affections too ſhould be ſuitably engaged in what we are about. As Seriouſneſs ought to be oppoſed to Levity, ſo Devotion to Formality. This latter Evil is to be carefully guarded againſt, and the rather as the Frequency and Shortneſs of

of what we are about; with a ſerious and attentive Spirit, compoſed, but not dull; affectionate, but not paſſionate in our Addreſſes to God; praying in this Senſe, will have great Effect. With God it will be very powerful, and will put us upon endeavouring to procure what we pray for, and to be what we pray to be.

of theſe periodical Exerciſes too often prove an Occaſion of it! How have the moſt ſublime Duties of Religion with many People, in a Courſe of Time, dwindled into a Form! And when This has come to be the Caſe, Services that are in their own Nature and Tendency moſt rational, improving, and entertaining, have become irkſome and burdenſome. This, therefore, ſhould be particularly dreaded in Regard of the Duty we are recommending; becauſe, as we have obſerved, the Temptation to it is ſo conſiderable.

We are ſenſible, that it is ſcarce to be expected, that every One in a Family ſhould have a real Taſte for the exalted Pleaſures of Devotion; and in ſuch Caſe Decency and Attention is the moſt we can look for. But more than this is to be expected of thoſe who have entered into the Spirit of Religion: and ſuch we ſuppoſe to be their Character who preſide on theſe Occaſions. The Heads of Families, therefore, more eſpecially, ſhould be on their Guard, leſt Formality, to which they are liable in a Degree as well as others, ſteal upon them unawares, and ſo ſpoil the Savour of theſe pleaſant Exerciſes: which, by the Way, enables us to account for the Diſuſe into which this moſt reaſonable and important Duty hath fallen. Formality begets Dullneſs, Dullneſs Wearineſs, Wearineſs

Diſguſt, and Diſguſt Neglect. If therefore we have Religion at Heart, let us endeavour to diffuſe the enlivening Spirit of it through theſe ſhort Exerciſes! Let us read, and hear the Scriptures read, with all the Attention and Eagerneſs of thoſe who believe and know them to be the Word of God. Let the fragrant Incenſe of genuine Gratitude and Love perfume our Praiſes, deep Contrition of Heart accompany our Confeſſions, and ardent Deſires aſcend with our Petitions. Thus Family-Worſhip will not be a Taſk, but a moſt pleaſing and cheerful Service.

In fine, Great Care ought to be taken that our Deportment thro' the Day be agreeable to the ſolemn Profeſſions we thus regularly make in our Prayers to God. The Dignity of our Character as Chriſtians ſhould be expreſſed by an upright, ſerious, and manly Behaviour; and the Lovelineſs of it by our Good-nature, Benevolence and Cheerfulneſs. Having officiated at the Altar of our God, we ſhould preſerve a ſuitable Decorum of Conduct both at home and abroad; and not ſuffer the holy Veſtments, in which we have ſacrificed, to be polluted with Sin; and give Proof to all, that Family-worſhip is no Way inimical, but moſt friendly to our real Happineſs. Therefore,

Thirdly, Of the Objections that are uſually urged againſt a regular Attention to this Duty.

After

After what has been ſaid, it is preſumed no One will be ſo hardy as to maintain, that God has not required this Service at our Hands. We have clearly proved that it is a Dictate of Nature, that the Scriptures have enjoined it, and that it tends to promote both our temporal and ſpiritual Welfare. The Objections, therefore, we have to combat are of a practical Kind. We ſhall rank them under three Heads, – thoſe which reſult, 1ſt. from a total Diſaffection to Religion; – 2dly, from a criminal Indifference to it; and, 3dly, from a very cenſurable Kind of Timidity and Weakneſs.

Men who have no Senſe of Religion, and who yet have not thrown off the public Profeſſion of it, do many of them object, that the Practice is now ſo ſingular, that the Performance of it would expoſe them to Contempt.

An Objection this which One would think a Man of Senſe and Spirit would be aſhamed to make.

No One can juſtify the Omiſſion of a Duty, which the Light of Nature and Revelation teaches, by the general Neglect of thoſe around him. If this Sort of Reaſoning were good, it might be urged in Favour of all Manner of Wickedneſs and Villany whatever.

Muſt we, therefore, follow a Multitude to do Evil? No ſurely. Neither ſhould we follow a Multitude in the Omiſſion of what is good and praiſe-worthy. But this Objection proceeding from Puſillanimity, is an Im-

putation upon your Reſolution, as well as your Underſtanding. What ſhameful Cowardice, to ſuffer yourſelves to be laughed out of your Duty by People who have not Senſe enough to diſguiſe their Contempt of Religion with even the Shadow of a Reaſon! Void of all manly Courage, you are leſs deſerving of the Authority you hold in your Houſe, than the meaneſt Servant in it. But the Impiety of the Objection is the main Conſideration. The Language of it is, that you would rather obey Men than God, and rather endure his Frowns than theirs. And think you that this will not awaken the Reſentment of Heaven againſt you? The Day, the awful Day is coming, when it will be told, in the hearing of Angels and Men, that the Sneer of a contemptible Infidel had more Weight with you than the Diſapprobation of him that made you: and that as you were aſhamed of Chriſt and your Duty before Men, "He alſo will be aſhamed of you, in the Preſence of the holy Angels, when he ſhall come in his own Glory, and that of his Father, to judge the World."

adly, Others, more thro a criminal Indifference to Religion than a Dread of the Cenſure of the World, object that their Affairs are ſo circumſtanced that they cannot conveniently worſhip God in their Families.

But, in how trifling a Point of Light muſt ſuch Perſons view this Duty! Conſider, we beſeech you, what

has

has been said of its Nature, Utility, and Importance; and tell us whether you can seriously think, that every other Business ought to take the Precedence of this. Do you from Day to Day go without your Food and Rest, and excuse the Neglect by saying, that you have no convenient Time for the one or the other? If you were sensible, as you ought to be, that your Success in worldly Business depends upon the Favour of Providence, and that what you get, cannot be properly enjoyed without the divine Blessing; and especially if you were duly sensible of the vast Importance of your best Interests, and of those of your Family, you would blush in making so frivolous an Excuse. A firm Persuasion that there is a God, and that he requires this Service at your Hands, would bear down before it much greater Obstructions than you have to complain of. Be the Hurries of Business what they may, is there no Time to be redeemed from Rest, and other sensual Gratifications, for the Worship of him to whose Goodness you owe all your Enjoyments? It is no long tedious Service that is required of you. And your Habitation must be very strait and inconvenient indeed, if it will not admit of some Place to which you and your Children may retire, to offer a few Petitions to Heaven. Think with yourselves whether these Excuses will bear a serious Reflection. Can you lay

your Hand on your Heart, and say, Your Conscience is satisfied with them? If not, will they avail you any thing on that great Occasion, when you will be called to a strict Account for these Neglects? Realize that awful Day! It is quickly approaching. The Warnings you have received, the Examples of pious Men on these Occasions, the Evils your Children and Servants suffer through these criminal Omissions of yours, and even the Regard that Pagans themselves have, in THEIR Way, paid to this Duty, will all rise up in Judgment against you. Be entreated, then, to give no longer Heed to these frivolous Objections, but to set about this Business immediately, with all the Attention and Seriousness which its Importance demands. — But there is one more Objection,

Lastly, Which as it proceeds not from a Contempt of Religion or Indifference to it, but from timid Bashfulness and Weakness, deserves to be treated with Tenderness and Pity. It is this: "I would gladly worship God in my Family, but am not qualified to conduct the Service in a decent, agreeable, & edifying Manner." If this Objection arises from an Apprehension, that by engaging in this Duty you will hazard your Reputation for good Sense and Elocution, in the Opinion of your Children and Servants, it is a very censurable one. It is an Argument of a weak Mind. For what tho'

no you fail in Ease and Propriety of Expression, the Authority you hold in your Family ought surely to make you superior to any Apprehensions of this Sort from those who are so much your Inferiors. And it is an Argument of some Defect too in your religious Character. For a Regard to the great God, who requires this Duty of you, and in whose Presence it is to be performed, ought to subdue the first Risings of Pride in your Breasts.

But you insist, that "you really have not the Gift of Prayer." Let me beseech you to consider what Prayer is. It is the offering our Desires to God. Words are of no Account in Regard of him: it is the Sincerity, Humility, and Fervency of our Spirit He looks upon. In Regard of Others, however, Words are necessary: but if they are plain and intelligible, that is enough. Now, possessed of suitable Desires and Affections, and having overcome the Timidity (just spoken of,) you will not be at so great a Loss for Words as you are ready to imagine. You feel your Wants both temporal and spiritual; your own, and those of your Family: where then is the Difficulty of enumerating them, either more generally or particularly, and of earnestly intreating God to supply them? You feel and enjoy those Blessings you have received: where then, I may add, is the great Difficulty of reciting and acknowledging

knowledging them with Expreſſions of Gratitude and Praiſe? But the beſt Way to obtain a Freedom of praying in your Family, is to accuſtom yourſelf to free Prayer in your Retirements. He who regularly maintains Intercourſe with God in his Cloſet, will ſoon find himſelf qualified for it in his Family. But even admitting that you cannot, after all, ſummon together Reſolution enough for the profitable Diſcharge of this Duty, you are not juſtified in the Neglect of Family-Worſhip; for there are Forms of Prayer which you may uſe; and the Church, in particular Condeſcenſion to the Weakneſs of her Members, and to preſerve Uniformity and Soundneſs in the Faith, hath preſcribed One, which ſhe enjoins all her Members conſtantly to comply with. — And now,

This Objection removed, permit me to entreat you, as you tender the Honour of God, the Proſperity of your Family, and your own Comfort, to erect immediately an Alter in your Tent, and to offer thereon, with pure Hands and fervent Lips, daily Sacrifices of Prayer and Praiſe to Heaven.

Before we put a Period to this Diſcourſe, allow me to detain your Attention a little to two religious Exerciſes, not yet mentioned, which come within the Idea of Family Worſhip. The One is ORDINARY, and the other EXTRAORDINARY. As

As to the former, it is "the asking a Blessing, and returning Thanks at our Meals." This is a very natural Duty, and, as such, almost generally practised among sober People. How fit, when we sit down to Meat, to beg of God to command his Blessing on the Food his Providence has prepared for us? And when we rise, to make our grateful Acknowledgments for the Refreshments we have received? Nor are we without sufficient Authority in Scripture for this Practice.

The Apostle exhorts us, in general, "Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, to do all to the Glory of God." And in another Place he tells us, that "every Creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with Thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the Word of God and Prayer." Our Saviour's Example too has added a pleasing and most important Sanction to this Custom. When he fed the Multitude in the Wilderness, "he took the Loaves and the Fishes, and gave Thanks." When he instituted the holy Supper, in Commemoration of his Death, "he took Bread and blessed it, and the Cup also, and gave Thanks." And when he sat at Meat with the Disciples at Emmaus, "he took Bread and blessed it."

Thus stands the Enforcement of this Duty. But the careless Manner in which it is too often performed, deserves very severe Reprehension. That

ſaying Grace, as it is uſually called, is in moſt Inſtances a mere Form, as may be too ſadly ſuſpected from the negligent Air in which it is performed.

The Offence which this has juſtly given to ſerious People, has driven ſome of them into an oppoſite Extreme, which hath not failed to be as ſharply cenſured. Prudence and Piety, plainly dictate the Medium between the two Extremes. Let us be ſerious and ſelf-collected, whilſt, in a Sentence, or two, we are addreſſing ourſelves to God. The Importance of this is great. For it ſtands to Reaſon, that a heedleſs deſultory Manner of performing this Duty muſt be very offenſive to God, and not only defeat the ſalutary Ends of the Service, but tend to fix a Habit of trifling with ſacred things. (*)

We ſhall cloſe the Whole, with ſubmitting to the Conſideration of Maſters of Families, a few Thoughts, on a Service of an EXTRAORDINARY Kind, in which our pious Anceſtors, and ſome we truſt now living, have found their Account: [viz.] the ſetting apart a Day, on ſpecial Occaſions, for ſolemn Prayer, and Thankſgiving to God.

The Reaſonableneſs and Utility of ſuch Services, in Regard of Nations in general, are, by all Churches, allowed of, and practiſed: and we know not why they ſhould not be admitted in Regard of private Families,

(*) See Vol. xiv. Page 26, 27.

It

It is true, some Families may be so circumstanced as to render the Observation of a Day of Fasting and Prayer absolutely impracticable: or, however, it would be difficult for them to fix on a Time in which the Business of the House would allow all of them to attend. But this surely is not the Case with every Family. Nor is it to be doubted but most good People might, at certain Periods of their Lives, find a convenient Season for this Purpose, if they were really sensible of the Importance of it. To fix upon your Minds, therefore, a Sense of its Importance, is the present Object; and then the Time and Manner of conducting the Service, may well be submitted to your Discretion.

Events of a momentous Kind do sometimes take place in Families, either adverse or prosperous. Now, if on such Occasions every Family, to use the Language of the Prophet Zechariah, went to mourn and pray, & offer Prayer a-part; would not such Service be acceptable to God, and highly beneficial to themselves? A giddy World, who pay little Attention to the Providence of God in their temporal Concerns, and less to the religious Interests of their Families, may treat what we are recommending with Contempt. But will a wise, prudent, serious Man, who has the Welfare of his Soul at Heart, say that this is an unmeaning unnecessary Service? Figure to yourself such a little As-

ſembly, on a fixed Day, convened, without Noiſe or Oſtentation, in ſome retired Part of the Houſe, there ſeriouſly recollecting their paſt Sins and Mercies, there earneſtly pleading with God for a Bleſſing, there cheerfully acknowledging his Goodneſs, and there cordially devoting themſelves to his Service; all deeply impreſſed with the Solemnity of this extraordinary Act of Domeſtic Worſhip, and tell us whether it is not a lovely Sight. Can any one find it in his Heart to treat the Idea of ſuch a Service as trifling, nugatory, and unprofitable? Or will any One in his ſober Senſes pronounce ſuch a Day, loſt?

☞ See other Family-Duties, &c. in this Work,

[viz.]

Family-Peace,	Vol. ix. Page	282.
Family-Diſcord,		151
Family-Friendſhip,	Vol. x.	Page 253
Hoſpitality,	Vol. xv.	Page 385
Family-Feaſting, &c.	Vol. xiv.	Page 134

The End of the Twentieth Volume.

